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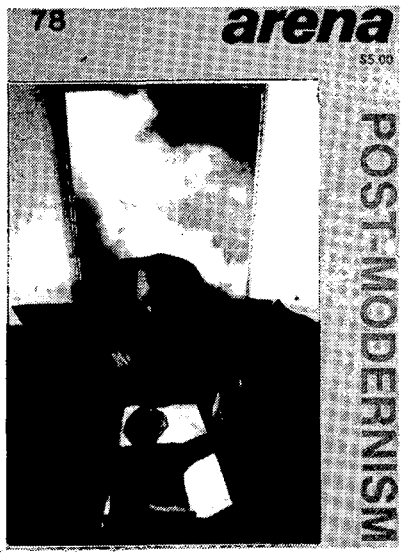

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Jeffrey Friedman

MARXISM AND LIBERALISM

Andrzej Walicki opens this special issue on Marx and Marxism with an exhaustive discussion of the precise nature of Marx's version of individual freedom. Given the richness of Walicki's account, it might be worth pointing out some of the arguments which bear directly on the theme of Marxism's relation to liberalism. Walicki, accepting the basic continuity of Marx's thought, contends that the despotic tendencies of twentieth-century socialism are a logical though wholly unintended product of ideas that undergird the entirety of Marx's corpus; thus, he brings to even Marx's early writings profound criticisms of the form of Marx's libertarianism. In effect, Marxism can be understood as a source of "really existing" socialist despotism inasmuch as it offers a socialist version of Rousseau's positive definition of freedom. Marx advocates freedom from alienation, i.e., from the impersonal forces of the market, rather than from the socially-induced selfish impulses that Rousseau claims prevent people from pursuing the common good. In neither case, however, is it the direct coercion of other human beings which is held to be the enemy of freedom, but instead subtle cultural forces which prevent human beings from being truly human—i.e., in Rousseau's case, truly moral; in Marx's, truly self-creating.

On this reading, it is not just that Marx's libertarian-humanist ideals are frustrated by the dynamics of really existing socialist practice: for by defining individual freedom in terms of the human species-essence rather than individual, negative, "atomistic" liberty, Marx made market exchange, or *any* spontaneous (undesigned) social order, into an intolerable source of alienation from the libertarian human es-

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sence. In Walicki's view, then, Marx's critique of spontaneous economic order assumes a pivotal role in his theory, and central economic planning and its accompanying tyranny is revealed as being neither an alien form grafted onto Marxism in the twentieth century nor as an unfortunate imperative of the economics of socialism, but instead as the very fulfillment of Marx's libertarian doctrine.

Kai Nielsen's essay, which contests the notion that Marxism must reject the concept of morality, may be seen as complementing Walicki's argument in two indirect senses. First, it explains how the indisputably moral concept of human freedom which is Walicki's topic *could have* played a central role in a putatively scientific system of thought; second, by situating Marx in the Enlightenment tradition of seeking emancipation through reason, it shows why (a Hegelian version of) human freedom *did* serve as Marx's goal, and perhaps even why Marx viewed submission to the "blind chance" of market forces as particularly loathsome.

Chris Sciabarra then takes up the utopian implications of the desire to overcome such chance. It is Marx's utopianism that may reconcile the contributions of David Felix on Marx and J. G. Merquior on Lukács—which seek, among other things, to identify religious elements in Marxism—with the view of Marx as Enlightenment rationalist. For it is in the identification of alienation from one's fellows and from society or economy at large as the primary human problem, and in the faith that that problem can be solved—even though the solution requires human, not divine activity—that religion and rationalism may merge in Marxism.

The concluding contributions of David L. Prychitko and Peter J. Boettke maintain that socialism cannot possibly accomplish what Marx wanted it to: both the abolition of human subjection to market forces and the continuation of economic prosperity. For in attempting to achieve the latter, Prychitko contends, decentralist socialists must back into private property and the market economy; the only way to avoid that, though, is to centralize the economy and destroy its productivity, as Boettke argues was the fate of the Bolsheviks under war communism. The reason for this dilemma, they argue, is to be found in the critique of the possibility of "socialist calculation" first broached in 1920, which emphasizes the knowledge-generating qualities of markets based on private ownership. Thus, although Sciabarra's discussion of Marx's utopian epistemological assumptions immediately follows Nielsen's because of its relationship to Marx as an "Enlightenment" figure, it could as profitably be read as a preface to the later essays by Prychitko and Boettke.

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Those contributors who challenge Marxism, then, rely on three fundamental contentions. First is Walicki's objection to the loss of negative freedom necessitated by Marxian socialism—a classic argument, but one that has probably never been so clearly tied to Marx's texts themselves. Second is the Sciabarra-Prychitko-Boettke theme of the economic chaos attendant upon the Marxian abolition of market relations. If valid, this undermines the claim that Marxism secures positive liberty, as does the point highlighted by Prychitko, that if the market is to be eschewed, decentralized political structures must inevitably give way to centralized decisionmaking—if any economic activity is to occur. All of these arguments relate to consequences of *socialism,* and thus may be thought to be irrelevant to Marxism in its late twentieth-century incarnation as a form of *cultural* critique. But the contributions of Paul Thomas and Sonia Kruks, who join Nielsen in sympathy with Marxism, underscore the fact that both classical and Western Marxism do, after all, criticize capitalism—an economic system, albeit one with great cultural consequences. For these criticisms to have political significance—for them to be objections against not the universal "human condition" but against changeable institutions—they must at least implicitly propose an alternative to capitalism, no matter how little attention that alternative has received in the Marxist, and especially the Western Marxist, tradition. Without the premise of feasible socialism, the neo-liberalism represented here argues, condemnations of the culture of capitalism may illuminate our situation, but they do nothing to delegitimize it.

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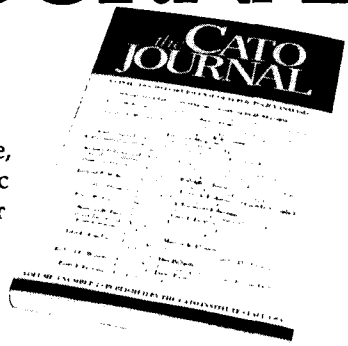

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Andrzej Walicki

KARL MARX AS PHILOSOPHER OF FREEDOM

The term "freedom" is notorious for the multiplicity of its meanings. It might be argued, however, that its basic and most generally used meaning coincides with the classical liberal definition of freedom as "independence of the arbitrary will of another."[1] According to this definition only man-made obstacles to individual effort can be described as limitations on freedom. We can be free of coercion or constraint, but we cannot be "free" of natural or objective necessity. True, objective necessity puts definite limits on our ability to do things, but ability should not be confused with freedom. I am not a slave if my physical strength does not enable me to do certain things, but I am a slave if my physical strength is not at my own disposal. Similarly, I am not unfree if I am unable to think creatively, but I am unfree if my creative thinking has been suppressed by forcible indoctrination.

Marx is well known as a severe critic of the liberal conception of freedom: of the concept of "free contract" between capitalist and worker, of the "formal" character of bourgeois democracy and especially of the liberal notion of human rights. He is known also as a theorist of universal determinism, stressing that socio-economic systems cannot be freely chosen, that both their sequence in time (their diachronic aspect) and their inner logic (their synchronic aspect) are subject to objective necessity independent of human will.[2] I have analyzed

The author, formerly at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, is O'Neill Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame. His most recent book is *Legal Philosophies of Russian Liberalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

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these problems elsewhere.[3] In the present article I shall concentrate on Marx's own philosophical conception of freedom.

In contrast to the liberals, Marx saw freedom not as individual and negative, but as collective and positive: as the full and unhindered self-actualization of the human "species-essence" in history. The realization of freedom was in his view a process of liberating people from the domination of things—both in the form of physical necessity and in the form of reified social relations. Finally, the most specific feature of Marx's conception of freedom was his invariably historical approach to the problem. His view of freedom formed part of his general philosophy of history; in fact it constituted its most important part because, as will be shown, freedom was conceived in it as the standard for transcultural appraisals, the only common yardstick for measuring historical progress between different modes of production and different social systems.[4]

In other words, Marx followed Hegel in elaborating a "historiosophy of freedom," that is, a comprehensive view of history as a dialectical process of developing freedom. Freedom was defined in this philosophy as the fullest self-actualization of man's "species-being" (*Gattungswesen*), as the truest possibility for the unfolding of human nature—the development of its inherent capacities and its potential richness. Development, in its turn, was conceived as the dialectical movement of self-enriching alienation. This concept, central to the entire Marxian philosophy, assumed (to put it briefly) that in order to develop oneself, one must exteriorize one's forces and subject oneself to alienation, because only in this way can what is potential, latent, become actual and self-conscious.

The term "alienation"—originally a theological term, taken up and developed by Hegel, Feuerbach and other German thinkers—means, first, going out of oneself, becoming something different from and alien to one's essence, and, second, giving something away, relinquishing something of one's own being, undergoing an amputation, as it were. In this sense the Incarnation was the alienation of God, who had to relinquish his divine attributes to assume a non-divine corporeal form; in a similar sense Hegel wrote about the alienation of the Spirit (*Geist*) which had to exteriorize itself in order to constitute the material world.[5] Self-enriching alienation is a dialectical movement through alienation to self-enrichment. Thus, the entire period of man's separation from God after the Fall could be interpreted as a journey from Paradise lost to Paradise not only regained but also enriched—enriched by the knowledge of what is good and what is bad, by freedom

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and consciousness. Similarly, in Hegelian philosophy the absolute spirit alienates itself in time, in order, after achieving the climax of alienation, to absorb into itself its alienated contents and thereby to enrich itself by raising itself to the level of self-consciousness.

Marx is known to have been deeply impressed by Feuerbach's reversal of the Hegelian (and Christian) view of alienation: by the claim that it was not the Absolute Spirit which had alienated itself in the world and in man, but, on the contrary, that it was man who had alienated his generic essence by externalizing it in the image of God. According to a widespread view, Feuerbach, in contrast to Hegel, "regarded alienation as an altogether negative phenomenon," as something purely evil, bringing about no positive values.[6] This view, however, seems to be erroneous. Undoubtedly, Feuerbach put stress on the negative aspect of alienation; but nevertheless, he too saw it as a self-enriching process. By creating God, he reasoned, man had in a sense impoverished himself and, moreover, had become dominated by his own creation; however, overcoming this alienation would entail the absorption by man of divine attributes, thus making man a truly divine being.

Marx followed Feuerbach in relating his theory of alienation to man's being, but his own theme was socio-economic alienation through the social division of labor in conditions of private ownership of the means of production—a process which entered its culminating phase with the development of modern capitalism. He saw the capitalist market as a force created by man but alien to him in having its own quasi-natural laws of development which opposed man and dominated him, thwarting his aims instead of being subjected to conscious control. Thus, man became enslaved by his own products, by things; even interhuman relations became reified, taking on the appearance of the objective relations between commodities in process of exchange, completely independent of man's will. This "commodity fetishism," or reification, was in Marx's view the worst, and a peculiarly capitalist, form of alienation.

By contrast, Marx described communism as "the positive abolition of private property and thus of self-alienation and therefore the real reappropriation of the human essence by and for man"; as "the complete and conscious return of man conserving all the riches of previous development for man himself as a social, i.e. human being"; as "the genuine solution of the antagonism between man and nature and between man and man," "the true solution of the struggle between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species," and,

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finally, as "the solution to the riddle of history" knowing itself to be this solution.[7]

These quotations from the young Marx are remarkably revealing. They perfectly fit the pattern of self-enriching alienation: man's return to himself is seen as self-enrichment, a return on a higher level. They show communism as the preordained goal of history, thus exposing the teleological structure of the Marxian philosophy of history. Finally, they describe communism as necessary for the sake not of equality but of the full self-actualization of the human essence—that is, for the sake of freedom, as Marx understood it. And, as we shall see, despite many qualifications, despite the appearance of a naturalist scientism, the same pattern of thought is to be found in the works of the mature Marx, the author of *Capital*.

The self-actualization of the human essence in history, i.e. the realization of freedom, was, in Marx's view, the aforementioned process of liberating man from the domination of both physical necessity and reified social relations. In order to liberate himself, to develop all the capacities inherent in his species nature, man must be able to exercise conscious rational control over his natural environment and over his own social force. Hence freedom in this conception has two aspects. In the relationship between man and nature, it consists in the maximization of the power of the human species, achieved through the development of productive forces. In the relationship between man and society, freedom means for Marx the conscious shaping by humans of the social conditions of their existence and so the elimination of the impersonal power of alienated, reified social forces. In this context he describes the future free society as "the association of individuals (assuming of course the advanced stage of modern productive forces) which puts the conditions of the free development and movement of individuals under their control."[8] In both cases freedom is conceived as the ability to determine one's fate, as positive freedom; in both cases freedom is opposed not to arbitrary coercion but to the uncontrolled objectivity of impersonal forces—both natural forces and the forces of historically produced "second nature," that is, the quasi-natural functioning of alienated social forces. Finally, freedom thus conceived is inseparable from rationality, rational predictability, and is opposed to the irrationality of chance.[9] Capitalism is condemned as not being rational enough and the final victory of freedom is seen as the replacement of market mechanisms with "production by freely associated men, consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan."[10]

According to Marx, the two aspects of freedom represented two

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successive stages in the history of self-enriching alienation: the maximization of the productive powers of the species at the cost of alienation (capitalism) and the de-alienation of these powers by rational planning (socialism). Following Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* he saw the capitalist epoch as both the most alienated and most progressive so far. With respect to the development of man's productive powers capitalism was, of course, a triumph of freedom; but with respect to man's control over his own social relations, it represented at the same time the greatest denial of freedom, the most complete domination by alienated and reified forces. Thus, as we read in *The German Ideology,* it is merely a bourgeois illusion that capitalism has liberated the individual; in fact what the bourgeoisie calls "personal freedom" boils down to leaving the fate of individuals to chance, which is the other aspect of the blind necessity which governs social relations as a whole. "Thus, in imagination, individuals seem freer under the dominance of the bourgeoisie than before, because their conditions of life seem accidental; in reality, of course, they are less free, because they are to a greater extent governed by material forces."[11]

Such is the general pattern, the triadic scheme of Marx's historiosophy of freedom. It underlies all his works, though, of course, it is most pronounced and explicit in his early philosophical writings. It was so because Marx quickly realized that a teleological conception of the meaning of history was too closely related to speculative idealism and therefore difficult to reconcile with the program of historical materialism. Hence already in *The Holy Family* and the *German Ideology* we find a number of statements decisively rejecting all teleology on a macro-historical scale. History itself, repeats Marx, does nothing; man is at once the actor and the author—the only author—of the historical drama. From this viewpoint a change in the definition of communism is very significant: "Communism is not for us a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality (will) have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things."[12]

Despite these caveats it would be difficult to maintain that Marx's remarks about the *totality* of the historical process do not implicitly contain the conviction that it forms a certain meaningful structure. Equally difficult would be an attempt to reduce the Marxian notion of "necessity" to a mere illusion of consciousness of the capitalist epoch.[13] Rejecting an a priori postulated, metaphysical "meaning of history," Marx was at the same time inclined to search in history (of course only on the scale of humanity) for an internal, dialectical meaning. This in

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turn strengthened his conviction that history is governed by necessity and that this necessity is a "meaningful" one, bringing it about that men's destinies are more than the outcome of a certain conjunction of accidents and guaranteeing a favorable solution to the historical drama. In other words, Marx saw in history the working of rational necessity and not merely the "natural necessity" which he wrote about in the preface to the first edition of *Capital*. Despite often forceful denials on his part (especially in *The Holy Family* and *The German Ideology*), Marx's was a necessity resembling secularized Providence or Hegelian "Reason in history," in a "cunning" way making use of man to achieve various ends of its own—ends which only in the final stage of history were to become identical with man's conscious goals.

Marx's essential faithfulness to the conception of self-enriching alienation manifested itself differently in different stages of his intellectual evolution: from the explicit embrace of this conception in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) to deliberate attempts to conceal it behind, or rather underneath, the seemingly "naturalistic-scientific" structure of *Capital*. Hence it is useful to present different aspects of this conception in chronological order and, for the sake of clarity and conciseness, to limit our presentation to those works of Marx which are especially important in this respect.

Communism as Universal Liberation

We should start, of course, with Marx's early writings, among which his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* occupy the central place.

Following Feuerbach, Marx conceived the subject of alienation not as Hegelian Absolute Spirit but as "real man of flesh and blood, standing on the solid, round earth and breathing in and out all the powers of nature."[14] Such a subject is not a "pure" subject, idealistically conceived. It is instead an objective being, endowed with certain physical, biological qualities; "it only creates and posits objects because it is posited by objects, because it is by origin natural. Thus in the act of positing it does not degenerate from its 'pure activity' into creating an object; its objective product only confirms its objective activity, its activity as an activity of an objective, natural being."[15]

However, Marx continues, "man is not only a natural being, he is a human natural being. This means that he is a being that exists for himself, thus a species-being that must confirm and exercise himself as such in his being and knowledge."[16] He is a being who strives for in-

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dependence, and "a being only counts itself as independent when it stands on its own feet and it stands on its own feet as long as it owes its existence to itself."[17] Independence therefore presupposes autocreation, which is precisely what distinguishes man from other natural beings. The humanization of the species called "man" is a product of a long historical process of autocreation through collective labor.[18] Thus, for man nature is not something ready-made, given; rather, it appears to him as nature "formed in human history," "fashioned by industry."[19] Through labor man shapes both external nature and himself, his senses, his faculties. Industry should be conceived as "the open revelation of human faculties," or as "the real historical relationship of nature to man."[20] Similarly, natural science should be conceived as a powerful instrument of human historical praxis and thereby "lose its one-sidedly materialist, or rather idealistic, orientation."[21] In other words, natural scientists should become aware that science deals only with "nature for man," that "nature in itself" is a materialistic metaphysics and that science divorced from practice, aiming at purely theoretical, disinterested truth, is an idealistic illusion.

In this manner Marx wanted to distinguish his standpoint from both idealism, which sees man as a disembodied subject, and metaphysical, contemplative materialism, which sees him as a passive natural object. "We see," he wrote, "how consistent naturalism or humanism is distinguished from both idealism and materialism and constitutes at the same time their unifying truth."[22] This unifying truth consisted in the view of man as a truly unique part of nature: a natural being capable of autocreation, increasingly independent of nature, endowed with the possibility of achieving conscious, rational self-determination. The realization of this possibility—freedom—was in Marx's view (as in Hegelianism) the inner content and the ultimate goal of history.

However, the tragic law of development through alienation demands sacrifices. The human species can develop only by exteriorizing its inner faculties, objectifying its activity and losing control over it, thus creating an external, autonomous world which confronts people as an alien force of nature and grows at the expense of individual human beings. This alienated world of human products, the objects of political economy, is a form of human self-creation, laying foundations for man's liberation from the yoke of external nature; at the same time, it is a form of human self-enslavement. Human labor assumes in itself the form of *alienated* labor—that is, an activity alienating (1) nature from man, (2) man from himself and also (3) man from his spe-

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cies.[23] The activity of alienated labor increases man's freedom in relation to external nature but, at the same time, brings about the degradation of man as a rational, self-conscious being. This state of affairs affects all humans but above all the workers, who deny themselves in their work while feeling freely active only in the animal functions of eating, drinking and procreating.[24] The relation between the worker and the product of his work becomes inversely proportional: "The more powerful becomes the alien, objective world that he creates opposite himself, the poorer he becomes himself in his inner life and the less he can call his own."[25] Thus, the general scheme was here the same as in Feuerbach, and Marx fully recognized this. "It is the same in religion," he commented. "The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself."[26] But economic alienation was in his view the primary phenomenon, explaining religious alienation—not vice versa: "Religious alienation as such occurs only in man's interior consciousness, but economic alienation is that of real life, and its abolition therefore covers both aspects."[27]

The only bonds keeping together this world of people alienated from each other, from nature, from their products and from their species-essence are the same forces in which the self-alienation of humankind achieved its most extreme expression: namely, the division of labor and monetary exchange. Both create mutual external dependencies while destroying all the inner ties that stem from man's communal nature. Both increase man's power over external nature at the cost of his dehumanization. Marx was especially fascinated by the miraculous power of money to exchange everything for everything and thus to achieve the colossal extension of interhuman relations—at the cost of their utter alienation. He called money "the true agent both of separation and of union," "the exterialized and self-externalizing species-being of man."[28]

Economic alienation results not only in putting people under the rule of the objects created by them but also, and particularly, in putting workers under the yoke of the owners of private property.[29] In Marx's view all slave relationships were just modifications and consequences of this basic relationship of the worker to his product. Hence the abolition of private property was tantamount to general human emancipation. But this abolition should have nothing in common with the "crude communism," that is, "a regression to the unnatural simplicity of the poor man without any needs."[30] On the contrary: it was to be the *positive* transcendence of private property, that is, an abolition of private property in conditions of highly developed and

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universal needs. *Private* property was to be abolished, but property in the sense of the genuine *appropriation* of the products of labor by laborers would be restored in its true meaning and firmly established. In other words, the abolition of private property provides a positive solution to the struggle "between objectification and self-affirmation," enabling working people to reappropriate the objects created by them by liquidating the autonomous power of these objects and reducing them to the obedient organs of the extended body of humankind.

Conceived in this way, communism, in Marx's view, signified the final end of the drama of self-enriching alienation: "the abolition of human self-alienation and therefore the real reappropriation of the human essence by and for man."[31] This contention seems to contradict Marx's statement that "communism is the necessary form and dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism is not as such the goal of human development."[32] This contradiction, however, boils down to different usages of the term communism. In his *Manuscripts* Marx distinguished three forms of communism, and it is clear that his description of communism as "not as such the goal of human development" referred to the second form of communism, that is, to the existing communist movements, much superior to "crude communism" (the first form) but still inadequately grasping the *positive* essence of private property, defining their goal as its simple negation and, therefore, still imprisoned and contaminated by it.[33] There is, however, the third and highest form of communism—the final reconciliation between existence and essence, the "solution to the riddle of history." This form of communism *is,* of course, the goal of human history, but it can no longer be defined as the *negation* of private property: with the disappearance of private property communism conceived as its negation is also doomed to disappear. Similarly, atheism will not have any meaning at the stage when religious alienation is positively transcended: people who have regained their divine attributes no longer need a denial of God.[34]

As the *positive* abolition of private property, that is, as the final return of man to his essential nature after the long and painful development through alienation, communism will bring about a truly unheard of, unimaginable feast of universal liberation. It will usher in the complete emancipation of all human senses and qualities: the eyes and ears of the de-alienated people of the future will be completely different from the crude, inhuman eyes and ears of the dehumanized people of the present.[35] True, individuals will remain mortal but for Marx this was no grave problem. "The individual," he reasoned, "is the social

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being. . . . The individual and the species-life of man are not different, although, necessarily, the mode of existence of individual life is a more particular or more general mode of species-life."[36] Hence, what is mortal is merely the particular, the inessential. On this ground Marx based his hope that the superior human beings of the de-alienated future will feel so strongly their essential identity with the species that personal mortality will cease to be perceived as a tragedy. In this sense the third form of communism was for him the universal reintegration and the "true solution of the struggle between individual and species."[37] There is no exaggeration in saying that communism, so conceived, was for him nothing less than a secularized version of the millenarian ideal of collective earthly salvation.

The Division of Labor and the Utopia of Human Self-Identity

The next step in the development of Marx's views on freedom is his *German Ideology*—a long manuscript written by him together with Engels in 1845–46. Rejected under different pretexts by the publishers and abandoned by the authors to "the gnawing criticism of the mice,"[38] it appeared only in 1932.

"It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness."[39] With this aphorism Marx wanted to provide the new ground for post-Hegelian discussions of human liberation. The young Hegelians, and even Feuerbach, saw human beings as enslaved by different ideological alienations, that is, by illusions of consciousness which had assumed an independent existence; hence they rebelled against these imaginary beings, replacing them with "thoughts corresponding to the essence of man." This, according to Marx, was an expression of idealistic illusions: the naive beliefs that a purely intellectual critique can bring about a genuine intellectual liberation, and that the latter might be equivalent to general human emancipation. In fact, however, the road to liberation is much longer and more difficult: illusions of consciousness are rooted in the forms of human cooperation; alienated ideas reflect alienated forms of social life, so intellectual liberation on a mass scale is not conceivable without a *social* emancipation of the masses. Moreover, the degree of social emancipation depends not only on class struggle and the revolutionary energy of the masses: it depends above all on the degree of man's achievements in economic and, particularly, technological development. "Preconditions of the real liberation of man" were described by Marx as follows: "the 'liber-

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ation' of 'man' is not advanced by a single step by reducing philosophy, theology, substance and all the rubbish to 'self-consciousness' and by liberating 'man' from the domination of these phrases . . . it is possible to achieve real liberation only in the real world and by real means . . . slavery cannot be abolished without steam-engine and the mule jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture and, in general, people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. 'Liberation' is a historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the [level] of industry, com-[merce], [agri]culture, [intercourse]."[40]

In developing these thoughts further, Marx pointed out that by the term "social" he meant "the co-operation of several individuals" and that a given mode of cooperation, or a *social* stage, was always combined with a definite mode of production, or *industrial* stage.[41] It followed from this that the level of social and industrial development "is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labor has been carried."[42] At the same time, however, the degree of the development of the division of labor is the measure of man's self-alienation.

In tribal society the division of labor was confined, in fact, to a further extension of the natural division of labor existing in the family; thus "social structure was limited to an extension of the family,"[43] preserving patriarchal despotism but, at the same time, exercising conscious control over its production and distribution of resources. Under feudalism the division into estates became strongly marked but the social division of labor had not advanced far: in agriculture natural economy still prevailed while "in industry there was no division of labor in the individual trades and very little between them."[44] Full development of the social division of labor came into being only at the capitalist stage, when production became narrowly specialized and destined for a broader and more anonymous market, a power subject to its own laws, created by men but uncontrollable by them, thwarting their plans and cruelly playing with their lives. In this manner the spontaneous division of labor, stemming from the need for commodity exchange, brought about a situation in which people became enslaved by their own products. Marx defined this process in terms of his theory of alienation: "this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into a material power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now. . . . In history up to the present it is certainly likewise an empirical fact that

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separate individuals have, with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity, become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them (a pressure which they have conceived of as a dirty trick on the part of the so-called world spirit, etc.), a power which has become more and more enormous and, in the last instance, turns out to be the *world market*."[45]

At this point, however, Marx could apply his dialectical historiosophy of freedom: the worst alienation turned out to be self-enriching, so that universal mutual enslavement proved to be a necessary condition for universal mutual liberation. The world market, Marx reasoned, liberates individuals from various national and local barriers, brings them into practical connection with the material and intellectual production of the whole world and thus puts them in a position to acquire the capacity to enjoy this all-sided production of the whole earth.[46] In this way universal human intercourse creates not only all-round dependence but also the possibility of an all-round development of each individual. All-round dependence, this *natural* form of the world-historical cooperation of individuals, will be transformed by the communist revolution into a *voluntary* world-historical cooperation, and will thereby put an end to human alienation. Freely associated individuals will gain control and conscious mastery over their social power. Communist regulation of production and exchange will thus create a truly human world in which people, as rational and conscious beings, will feel themselves free and at home, exercising full conscious control over their products instead of allowing them to grow into an alien world, enslaving its producers. Personal freedom will no longer be confused with "the right to the undisturbed enjoyment, within certain conditions, of fortuity and chance."[47] It will be realized in accordance with its true meaning—that is as rational, conscious self-determination, presupposing a person's control and direction of his self-objectifications and harmonious, communal relations with other people.[48]

Certain observations need to be made at this juncture. As we can see, the term "free" was, in Marx's usage, a synonym for "consciously regulated" and an antonym of "natural" (in the peculiar sense of "alien," i.e., existing independently of man). Freedom was also associated with rationality and hence opposed to chance. The term "spontaneous" meant "not subordinated to a general plan of freely combined individuals" and, therefore, evoked associations with blind natural necessity, not freedom.[49] In other words, Marx is here much closer to Hegel than to Feuerbach: like the former, he excludes the

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"natural" from his notion of freedom and defines freedom in terms of rational and conscious activity, that is, as an overcoming of "merely natural" determinations.

Another Hegelian feature of this conception was the identification of freedom with the self-aggrandizement of the creative subject through the absorption of everything outside itself in order to become, in the full sense, itself.[50] Unlike Hegel, Marx did not deal, of course, with the relationship between the Absolute Spirit and the world: he dealt only with the relationship between humankind, as the creative subject of history, and the human products which had become independent of men by taking the form of a quasi-objective "second nature." In this interpretation freedom meant the establishment of full control over man's alienated forces and, finally, their full reabsorption by the superior, universally developed human beings of the communist future. Communism, in Marx's view, was to be the triumph of man's free self-creation, the final overcoming of economic and social alienation. "Communism," Marx wrote, "for the first time consciously treats all naturally evolved premises as the creations of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals. . . . The reality which communism creates is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality is nevertheless only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals."[51]

In Marx's view, the victory of communism presupposed the abolition of the division of labor.[52] This should make it clear that the free individuals of his communist society were conceived as individual specimens of humankind, and not as specific, qualitatively different individualities, products of the differentiating function of the division of labor. They were to be "communal beings" because "only within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions."[53] They were not to be free to develop their specific, particular individualities, distinguishing themselves from other individuals; on the contrary, they were to be free to develop their *common* human nature, that is, not in one specific direction but as all-round human beings, capable of satisfying all their own needs, without becoming dependent on others and without being imprisoned in a particular, exclusive sphere of activity. In communist society, Marx wrote, it will be possible for each individual "to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic."[54]

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In spite of the somewhat jocular form, Marx really meant what he wrote. He did not want, of course, a return to the primitive conditions preceding the development of the division of labor—such retrospective utopias were explicitly prohibited by his general theory of history. His utopianism was more imaginative and definitely futuristic. His favorite esoteric idea of self-enriching alienation convinced him that the stage of exteriorization and alienation of one's inner content must be followed by the reappropriation of this content, in this way achieving a return to oneself on the highest level. This meant in practice that the industrial development produced by the social division of labor, being in fact the exteriorized, alienated form of developing man's species powers, should give way to the communist freedom which would dealienate these powers by replacing the power of capitalist industry and the all-round dependence on the world market with the power of freely united and universally developed individuals.

This miraculous appearance of a new and vastly superior race of men was to be the result of the abolition of private property. Marx boldly believed that the appropriation of the existing totality of productive forces—through the expropriation of their private owners—would result in "the development of the individual capacities corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in individuals themselves."[55]

What could be added to this fantastic utopia, outlined by authors who otherwise described themselves as resolute anti-utopians? A few details, such as the abolition of the state, the disappearance of professionalism in art (since every member of society would be able to become an artist without professional teachers) and even the abolition of the state of affairs in which "individuality is subservient to chance"[56]—in a word, "the true solution of the struggle between existence and essence," as promised in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*.

This utopian edifice was to secure the realization of the Marxian idea of freedom. It is quite surprising that many scholars, otherwise very critical of Marxism and, especially, keenly aware of the dangers of unbridled utopianism, find that idea very attractive and worthy of passionate defense. Leszek Kolakowski, for instance, writes about it as follows: "The restoration of man's full humanity, removing the tension between individual aspirations and the collective interest, does not imply a denial on Marx's part of the life and freedom of the individual. It has been a common misinterpretation by both Marxists and anti-Marxists to suppose that he regarded human beings merely as specimens of social classes, and that the 'restoration of their species-

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essence' meant the annihilation of individuality or its reduction to a common social nature. On this view, individuality has no place in Marxist doctrine except as an obstacle in the way of society attaining to homogeneous unity. No such doctrine, however, can be derived from *The German Ideology*. . . ."[57] Marx, Kolakowski continues, criticized the situation in which "people confronted one another as representatives of the impersonal forces that ruled the world—goods, money, or civil authority—while the individual's 'freedom' meant a lack of control over the conditions of his own life, a state of impotence *vis-à-vis* the external world. To reverse this reification and restore man's power over things is likewise to restore his individual life, the possibility of all-round development of his personal aptitudes and talents."[58]

Let us examine, as briefly as possible, this strange reasoning.

Freedom conceived as full, conscious control of man's collective fate presupposes, of course, the *ability* to control, that is, a public body able to exercise effective control over all spheres of social life. This would immediately liquidate the sphere of the "uncontrollable," i.e., that of "negative" individual freedom. Moreover, the replacement of self-regulating impersonal mechanisms by conscious decisions would severely restrict the scope of individual freedom in the positive sense as well. "For it is the association of individuals (assuming the advanced stage of modern productive forces, of course) which puts the conditions of free development and movement of individuals under their control,"[59] says Marx. This can only mean that dependence on things will be replaced by a situation in which the development and movement of individuals will be controlled by an association; or, to put it differently, in which impersonal dependence will be exchanged for a total personal dependence on a collective body. It seems that no genuine liberal could see this as an increase of personal freedom.

But what about freedom from the dependence on things, freedom as man's conscious mastery over his products? It does not seem that such freedom could ever be attained: products produced on a mass scale, including the products of knowledge, have a natural tendency to become autonomous, to live their own life, bringing about unintended, sometimes disastrous, sometimes beneficial results, most often varying among the different groups of the population. Would it really be an increase of freedom if everything were made fully predictable and firmly controlled? In such a fully controlled social universe there would be no element of chance, no room for adventure, no individual choice of one's own way in the pursuit of happiness. In this sense

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Hayek was probably right when he wrote: "Freedom means that in some measure we entrust our fate to forces which we do not control."[60]

Finally, Marx's ideal of collective freedom is obviously incompatible with pluralism and social differentiation. It presupposed the abolition of the division of labor which meant also the "abolition" of specialized, "individualized" individuals, each having different skills and different interests. True, in contrast to such egalitarian communists as Babeuf or Tkachev, Marx explicitly rejected the idea of levelling down, as well as all conceptions of a forceful regimentation of society. He also made it clear that man's mastery over his fate was to be realized not through a dictatorship of an enlightened elite but rather through participatory democracy: "Modern universal intercourse cannot be controlled by individuals, unless it is controlled by all."[61]

However, universal participatory democracy is completely unsuitable for modern, complex and pluralistic societies. Kolakowski himself stressed elsewhere that for both historical and technical reasons "it is obviously impracticable in any community larger than a medieval Swiss village."[62] How could Marx imagine that a communist society based upon "modern universal intercourse" and, therefore, extended to global dimensions might allow all its members an equal share in decision-making? How was it possible to believe that all these different individuals could harmoniously cooperate with each other, pursue the same aims, fully agree with one another as to their common good, accept in their thinking the same criteria of rationality and, above all, espouse the same hierarchy of values?

The only possible explanation is that Marx saw the free individuals of the future not as *individualized* human beings but as "species-beings," i.e. "communal beings." He agreed that freedom means self-determination, acting in accordance with one's true self, but he sharply differed from individualistic liberalism in his definition of "true self." He would not have agreed that "individual freedom is the freedom that is limited by individuality,"[63] or that it means the unfettered development of the uniqueness and specificity of individuals and thus demands more and more room for social differentiation. True self, he thought, cannot be something different from fundamental human essence. Once people are freed from everything that is not wholly themselves, they will be left with their essential identity as human beings, specimens of the same species. In that case—*only* in that case—they can be expected to merge together in a spontaneous unanimity, to share the same values and to strive for the same collective aim, to cooperate with one another without conflict, without the mediation of

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things (like money) and, of course, without separate political bodies serving as instruments of mediation or moderation.

In his essay on "The Myth of Human Self-Identity" Kolakowski pointed out that "the dream of a perfectly unified human community," deeply rooted in European culture and embraced by so many socialist thinkers, is the deepest source of totalitarian utopias whose practical consequences are always destructive of freedom. He wrote: "There is no reason to expect that this dream can ever become true except in the cruel form of despotism; and despotism is a desperate simulation of paradise."[64]

As should be evident, I fully share this view. I want only to add that it could be legitimately applied to *The German Ideology*—despite Kolakowski's defense of this text. It seems that there are only two possibilities when interpreting this curious utopia: either as a program of abolishing all self-regulating mechanisms of society by subjecting all spheres of human life to conscious regulation by "associated producers," or, more radically, as a vision of the perfect unification of humankind. In the first case we would have a kind of democratic totalitarianism which could function only in the unlikely conditions of universal unanimity or, at least, universal readiness to conform to collective pressures. The second interpretation evokes associations with mystico-metaphysical dreams of overcoming sinful individualization and returning to the original Oneness. In both these interpretations, however, individual freedom—that is, freedom of *individualized* human beings, freedom as diversity and pluralism, as individual autonomy and the possibility of "being different"—is resolutely excluded. This is the essential meaning of Marx's hostility to the division of labor.

The Liberating and the Enslaving Function of the World Market

In the *Grundrisse* (1857–58) Marx the philosopher begins to become Marx the economist—but his general concerns, and his view of freedom in particular, remain the same. For it now emerges that the individual's subjugation to the division of labor is the price paid for "free" economic competition, and the resultant development of economic productivity.

Thus, in Marx's view, economic freedom results in the subjugation of people to the rule of things, symbolized by money. Interestingly, Marx was fully aware of the inverse relationship between reified, impersonal dependence and personal dependence on other people: "The less social power the medium of exchange possesses . . . the greater

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must be the power of the community which binds the individuals together, the patriarchal relation, the community of antiquity, feudalism and the guild system. . . . Rob the thing of this social power and you must give it to persons to exercise over persons."[65] But, in sharp contrast to the liberals, he rejected the view that in comparison with the personal dependence that was characteristic of patriarchal, tribal or feudal relations, impersonal reified dependence, or interdependence, augmented freedom. On the contrary, he continued to maintain that, as he put it in *The German Ideology,* members of bourgeois society are in fact "less free, because they are to a greater extent governed by material forces."[66] He conceded that their freedom *seems* to be greater than under feudal bondage but insisted that "on closer examination" this turns out to be a mere illusion.[67] Objective dependency relations, he explained, allow greater freedom only to particular individuals who "may by chance get on top of these relations," but they do not change the basic relation between the exploiting and the exploited class; hence they involve "certain definite relations of personal dependency, but stripped of all illusions" and, in addition, greatly strengthened by the appearance of "objectivity," that is naturalness and permanence.[68] As a matter of fact, objective dependency relations are "nothing more than social relations which have become independent" or "the reciprocal relations of production separated from and autonomous of individuals"; their "objectivity," therefore, is merely an illusion of consciousness—an illusion helping the oppressed to reconcile themselves with their fate through belief in its naturalness and objective inevitability. Therefore, Marx commented, this belief "is of course consolidated, nourished and inculcated by the ruling classes by all means available."[69]

Let us dwell for a while on this reasoning. It does not explain why "objective dependency" should be worse, from the point of view of freedom, than personal dependency. Rather it shows Marx's reluctance to acknowledge the fact that most people feel personal dependency to be worse, as well as his awareness that belief in the objective character of existing dependency relations makes the task of the revolutionary overthrow of the system especially difficult, if not impossible. Hence his attempt to prove that "objectivity" is merely an illusion of consciousness—an attempt resembling the views of the Left Hegelians (who specialized in combatting different "illusions of consciousness") and contradicting his own conception of alienation as a necessary phase of development, and not merely a phenomenon of consciousness.

On the other hand, it is obvious that his view of capitalism as the

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epoch of the greatest suppression of individual freedom was a dogmatic assumption which derived from his general theory of self-enriching alienation, which claimed that the mastery of the human species over non-human nature (the task of capitalist industrialization) could be achieved only at the expense of human beings as individuals. For that reason capitalism could not be seen by him as an addition to freedom in the relation "man-society." But he was more than ready, of course, to see it as the unfreedom which was laying the foundation for universal liberation in the future.

The triadic scheme which summarized this conception contained many brilliant sociological insights. It read as follows:

> Relations of personal dependence (entirely spontaneous at the outset) are the first social forms, in which human productive capacity develops only to a slight extent and at isolated points. Personal independence founded on objective (*sachlicher*) dependence is the second great form, in which a system of general social metabolism, of universal relations, of all-round needs and universal capacities is formed for the first time. Free individuality, based on the universal development of individuals and on their subordination of their communal, social productivity as their social wealth, is the third stage. The second stage creates the conditions for the third.[70]

At this second stage, characterized by a highly developed division of labor and exchange mediated by money, production is no longer *directly* social. Individuals are subsumed under social production but not vice versa, since they are unable to manage it as their "common wealth." The idea that a money economy might be subject to rational control in the interest of the community seemed to Marx "erroneous and absurd."[71] This was another one of his many essentialist and aprioristic assumptions: "The essence of Bourgeois society consists precisely in this, that *a priori* there is no conscious social regulation of production."[72] Conceived in this way capitalist society was opposed to two different forms of association which distribute labor internally: to pre-capitalist societies (patriarchal, ancient or feudal) in which distribution was based "on a natural or political super and subordination of individuals to one another," on the one hand, and to the future society of free individuals associated on the basis of common appropriation and control of the means of production.[73] This future society will stand in antithesis to the market economy, since exchange of the products of labor will no longer be private and mediated by money.

Bourgeois freedom, Marx argued, consists in the reciprocal in-

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dependence and indifference of isolated, private individuals. But the other side of this private independence, the inevitable and non-atomistic product of private exchange, is "complete dependence on the so-called world market."[74] In describing this dependence Marx uses not only the term "alienation" but also the term *"Versachlichung,"* literally reification; he writes, for instance, that "the existence of money presupposes the objectification (*Versachlichung*) of the social bond."[75] He appreciates the role of the market in providing economic knowledge but, characteristically, reduces this problem to conscious, articulated knowledge while completely disregarding the possibility that the amount of information inherent in the operations of the market might be incomparably greater than the amount of information accessible to the outward observers of these operations.[76] By definition, as it were, the practical application of knowledge means for him conscious regulation, while self-regulation is synonymous with alienation. Hence the market as such is a sphere of alienation, while institutions "whereby each individual can acquire information about the activity of all others," e.g. lists of current prices, rates of exchange, different statistical data, etc., are treated as efforts to overcome alienation.[77] Of course, these efforts could never succeed: in the conditions of a money economy, alienation is unavoidable.

Marx's feelings toward the world market were by no means one-sidedly negative. It was for him universal alienation, but it was also a form of universal interconnection, universal intercourse. Let us try to analyze, sentence by sentence, what he said about it on one important page of his *Grundrisse*.

"It has been said and may be said that this is precisely the beauty and the greatness of it: this spontaneous interconnection, this material and mental metabolism which is independent of the knowing and willing of individuals, and which presupposes their reciprocal independence and indifference."[78] Obviously, Marx does not refer here to his own views: for him spontaneity meant lack of conscious, rational freedom, and being independent of the knowing and willing of individuals was synonymous with a humiliating alienation. The positive view of the market presented by him belongs to the classics of liberal political economy. The contrast between this view and his own values shows the inadequacy of the widespread opinion attributing to classical liberals a one-sidedly rationalist view of society. Marx was in fact a very consistent supporter of the rationalization of social life; from his point of view capitalism was not rationalistic enough.

"And, certainly, this objective connection is preferable to the lack

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of any connection, or to a merely local connection resting on blood ties, or on primeval, natural or master-servant relations."[79] Of course: all-round dependence created by the world-market is a victory of universalism, albeit in an alienated form. All-round, objective dependence of the victims of capitalist alienation is the necessary condition for the all-round development of the de-alienated human beings of the future.

> Equally certain is it that individuals cannot gain mastery over their own social interconnections before they have created them. But it is an insipid notion to conceive of this merely *objective bond* as a spontaneous, natural attribute inherent in individuals and inseparable from their nature (in antithesis to their conscious knowing and willing). This bond is their product. It is a historic product. It belongs to a specific phase of their development. The alien and independent character in which it presently exists *vis-à-vis* individuals proves only that the latter are still engaged in the creation of the conditions of their social life, and that they have not yet begun, on the basis of these conditions, to live it. It is the bond natural to individuals within specific and limited relations of production.[80]

This passage is more difficult and, certainly, open to divergent interpretations. It seems, however, that its essential meaning coincides with the famous sentence from Marx's *Preface to a Critique of Political Economy:* "No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed."[81] Universal social interconnection appears to people as objective and alien because they are still engaged in the capitalist phase of self-creation, because capitalist productive forces, i.e., the exteriorized and alienated powers of humankind,[82] still have room for further development. Before the stage of self-consciousness and freedom begins, the stage of development through alienation must be completed. But this is a law of human self-creation in history, not an entirely objective and immutable law of nature.

The rest of the quoted paragraph confirms this interpretation although, at the same time, raising it, as it were, to a higher level of historiosophical abstraction. Marx writes:

> Universally developed individuals, whose social relations, as their own communal [*gemeinschaftlich*] relations, are hence also subordinated to their own communal control, are no product of nature, but of history. The degree and the universality of the development of wealth where *this* individuality becomes possible *supposes production on the basis of exchange*

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> *values as a prior condition,* whose universality produces not only the alienation of the individual from himself and from others, but also the universality and comprehensiveness of his relations and capacities. In earlier stages of development the single individual seems to be developed more fully, because he has not yet worked out his relationships in their fullness, or erected them as independent social powers and relations opposite himself. It is as ridiculous to yearn for a return to that original fullness as it is to believe that with this complete emptiness history has come to a standstill.[83]

Thus, production on the basis of exchange values and, hence, the total alienation, the "complete emptiness" bound up with it, is an unavoidable condition for achieving the highest stage of human development—that of "universally developed individuals." The unfolding of human essence in history is a dialectical movement involving three phases: the phase of primitive, undifferentiated fullness, presupposing economic self-sufficiency—that is, the natural economy; the phase of total alienation, total destruction of man's primitive fullness through the development of the division of labor, universal exchange and universal mutual dependence; and, finally, the phase of de-alienation in which human beings will regain their "fullness" without losing the universality and comprehensiveness of their relations. At this third stage social relations will be subordinated to communal control. In other words, production will no longer be based on exchange values. The forces which brought about the alienated development of man's relations and capacities—the money economy and the world market—will be abolished and replaced by a conscious regulation of economic and social processes.

The words "communal control" testify that Marx tried to preserve his youthful commitment to participatory democracy. He was obviously not aware, or not willing to acknowledge, that "a human planning agency must be hierarchically organized or it will display the very lack of control that constituted its raison d'être."[84] But he *was* fully aware that, to quote him once more, "the less social power the medium of exchange possesses . . . the greater must be the power of the community which binds the individuals together."[85] Hence he must have been aware that, in spite of his constant use of the term "free individuals," his vision of human liberation involved a tremendous strengthening of social cohesiveness and communal power over the individual. His "free individuals" were to be free as specimens of the human species, not as individualized beings, who pursue their own aims, not necessarily identical with the communal aims; they were to

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be liberated from reification and alienation but their dependence on the power of the community was to be increased, not loosened. Marx could sincerely believe that this would be "true freedom" because he was concerned with the freedom of man as a "communal being." If freedom means "living according to one's own nature,"[86] then the definition of freedom is dependent, of course, on the definition of what constitutes our true nature, our true selves. There cannot be any doubt that for Marx the true self was identical with "communal essence." True, unlike the majority of collectivists he wrote about "free individuals" in a positive sense, thus creating the impression that he subscribed to individualist values. But this is deeply misleading. "Free individual" in Marx's sense is *not* an individualist seeking maximum independence from the community, immune to its pressures, self-determining in the sense of being determined by his own unique individuality rather than by his general human essence. Marx's use of this term reverts to the vocabulary of the Feuerbach-inspired *Paris Manuscripts* of 1844, that is, as expressing the standpoint of humanistic naturalism (as opposed to the abstractions of speculative idealism and all other forms of alienated consciousness). In other words, his usage of the term "free individual" had no anti-collectivistic connotations; it meant "man free from alienation," not "man free from dependence on other men." Hence, his vision of the universal liberation of humankind does not include any safeguards for individual liberty. It concentrates on overcoming man's dependence on "vast, impersonal forces,"[87] such as the reified social power of capital, while completely neglecting the classic problems of preventing direct coercion, personal tyranny and other non-reified threats to human freedom. It did not occur to him that the aspiration for freedom as collective self-mastery, as conscious control over the fate of humankind, might create a concentration of power in which safeguards for individual freedom would be much more needed than in the conditions of unfreedom caused by the processes of reification and alienation.

Liberation Through Planning

As we can see, the division of labor and commodity production were in Marx's historiodicy a necessary evil through which humankind must pass in order to achieve the full and harmonious realization of its species' essence. Division of labor was the main target of his attacks in *The German Ideology*. But it is important to note that with the passage

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of time his attitude towards division of labor became more ambivalent,[88] more complex, while commodity production, production for money, and the "atomic" freedom bound up with it, came to be seen by him as *the worst* evil, the most complete form of human alienation. He began to reconcile himself to the division of labor as a necessary form of the rationalization of productive processes and to insist that it was perfectly conceivable *without* monetary exchange and commodity production. In *Capital* he stressed that the "division of labor is a necessary condition for the production of commodities, but it does not follow, conversely, that the production of commodities is a necessary condition for the division of labor. In the primitive Indian community there is social division of labor, without production of commodities. Or, to take an example nearer to home, in every factory the labor is divided according to a system, but this division is not brought about by the operatives mutually exchanging their individual products. Such products can only become commodities with regards to each other, as a result of different kinds of labor, each kind being carried on independently and for the account of private individuals."[89]

Chapter XIV of the first volume of *Capital* contains a section entitled "Division of Labor in Manufacture, and Division of Labor in Society." Although both of these two forms of division of labor are accused of entailing "some crippling of body and mind" of workers as individuals, the first is praised for introducing principles of efficient organization and rational planning, while the second is conceived of as surrendering control over production and exchange, thus bringing about the rule of things over man. The importance of this distinction justifies, I think, extensive quotations. Marx wrote:

> The division of labor in the workshop implies concentration of the means of production in the hands of one capitalist, the division of labor in society implies their dispersion among many independent producers of commodities. While within the workshop, the iron law of proportionality subjects definite numbers of workmen to definite functions, in the society outside the workshop, chance and caprice have full play in distributing the producers and their means of production among the various branches of industry. . . . The *a priori* system on which the division of labor, within the workshop, is regularly carried out, becomes in the division of labor within the society, an *a posteriori*, nature-imposed necessity, controlling the lawless caprice of the producers, and perceptible in the barometrical fluctuations of the market-prices. Division of labor within the workshop implies the undisputed authority of the capitalist over men, that are but pawns of a mechanism that belongs to him.

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> The division of labor within the society brings into contact independent commodity-producers, who acknowledge no other authority but that of competition, of the coercion exerted by the pressure of their mutual interests, just as in the animal kingdom, the *bellum omnium contra omnes* more or less preserves the conditions of existence of every species. The same bourgeois mind which praises division of labor in the workshop, life-long annexation of the laborer to a partial operation, and his complete subjection to capital, as being an organization of labor that increases its productiveness—that same bourgeois mind denounces with equal vigor every conscious attempt to socially control and regulate the process of production, as an inroad upon such sacred things as the right of property, freedom and unrestricted play for the bent of the individual capitalist. It is very characteristic that the enthusiastic apologists of the factory system have nothing more damning to urge against a general organization of the labor of society, than that it would turn all society into one immense factory.[90]

From historical hindsight the falseness of the view that the concentration of the means of production equals giving full control over them to *one* capitalist, or that the division of labor within the factory implies the undisputed authority of an individual capitalist, is obvious and does not need any comment. What is somewhat concealed in the above passages and needs to be made clear for a better understanding of Marx's conception of freedom is the fact that in spite of his gloomy picture of both forms of the capitalist division of labor, he saw the worst evil not in the "despotism in the workshop" but in the "anarchy of the market,"[91] and did not deny that the socialist society of the future would bear some resemblance to "one immense factory." In fact he had already said something similar in his *Poverty of Philosophy* (1847). There he wrote:

> Society as a whole has this in common with the interior of a workshop, that it too has its division of labor. If one took as a model the division of labor in a modern workshop, in order to apply it to a whole society, the society best organized for the production of wealth would undoubtedly be that which had a simple chief employer, distributing tasks to the different members of the community according to a previously fixed rule.[92]

This surprisingly naive idealization of what we today call "the command economy" is to be found also in Marx's views on the inner organization of the capitalist factories, and this fact should not be obscured by his concentration on the dark sides of industrialization. What was not explicitly said in his *Capital,* was said in Engels's works, especially

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in his *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. There we find a clear distinction between the "old" (spontaneous) and the "new" (consciously planned) division of labor, i.e., the "division of labor upon a *definite plan*, as organized in the factory."[93] Engels emphasized that the latter had become stronger than the former. The growth of trusts was in his eyes a phenomenon which paved the way for socialism: "In the trusts freedom of competition changes into its very opposite—into monopoly; and the production without any definite plan of capitalistic society capitulates to the production upon a definite plan of the invading socialistic society."[94]

Marx was more cautious in expressing positive views about capitalist factories or corporations but his conception of freedom nonetheless *required* the recognition of the superiority of "factory despotism" over the "freedom of the market." This was so because freedom, understood as conscious mastery over human collective fate, presupposed in his view the full control of the economy, that is, the abolition of independently acting private subjects of economic activity, the replacement of self-regulating mechanisms of the market by "directly social" production—in other words, by "production upon a definite plan." Hence he had to condemn "atomic" freedom and to see it as the main source of reification, i.e., the worst form of human alienation. Commodity production and the free market meant for him a society in which "the behavior of men in the social process of production is purely atomic. Hence their relations to each other in production assume a material character independent of their control and conscious individual action."[95] In this sense individual freedom in the economic sphere, i.e. freedom of private economic activity, seemed incompatible with individual freedom conceived as conscious self-determination. All these considerations led him to conceive of socialism, or "the co-operative society," as an order characterized by the absence of commodity production and monetary exchange. In his *Critique of the Gotha Program* he wrote about it in uncompromising terms:

> Within the co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labor employed on the products appear here *as the value* of these products, as a material quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labor no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of the total labor.[96]

This entailed not only the end of unplanned production but also the end of unplanned consumption, or, to put it differently, the abolition

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of individual freedom in the sphere of consumption, as guaranteed by money. Some of Marx's contemporaries saw very clearly the dangers of such an aim. Franz Mehring, for instance, accused Marx of wanting to establish the realm of freedom on the ruins of "individual freedom in defining our needs" and concluded from this that Marx's teaching might provide justification for the worst possible tyranny.[97]

The unfreedom caused by alienation and reification, stemming from developed commodity production and monetary exchange, had no parallel in pre-capitalist social formations, no matter how restrictive or despotic in all other respects. Thus the lack of individual independence characteristic of primitive societies, such as the ancient Indian community or the Peruvian Inca State, was idealized in *Capital* as the lack of mutual estrangement (*Fremdheit*) and therefore as a form of communal freedom, a state of affairs in which human products were not alienated by their producers and therefore were not allowed to get out of control.[98] In the Middle Ages everyone was dependent, but precisely because of this there was "no necessity for labor and its products to assume a fantastic form different from reality. . . . No matter, then, what we may think of the parts played by the different classes of people themselves in this society, the social relations between individuals in the performance of their labor, appear at all events as their own mutual personal relations, and are not disguised under the shape of social relations between the products of labor."[99]

Thus, the "commodity fetishism" due to which social relations between men assume in their eyes "the fantastic form of a relation between things"[100] did not exist in the Middle Ages, that is, at the early stage of commodity production. This meant for Marx that the phenomenon of reification was also absent. Personal dependence in a hierarchically constructed authoritarian system had not yet been replaced by objective (*sachlicher*), reified dependence, and this, in Marx's view, meant less alienation and, therefore, more freedom. In contrast to liberals, Marx obviously felt that reified forms of social relations, that is, such relations of dependence as are seen as something "objective" and "natural," are more destructive of human freedom than is clearly perceived personal dependence.[101]

Marx's idealization of the natural economy in primitive communism went much further. In a letter to Engels of March 25, 1868, he legitimized this idealization by stressing that what is oldest often contains the germs of what is newest; consequently, he found it normal that "looking beyond the Middle Ages into the primitive age of each nation" was becoming more and more widespread among socialists.[102]

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In later years he was delighted to find powerful support for such tendencies in Morgan's *Ancient Society*. He agreed with Morgan that the socialist order of the future would restore on a higher level the equality, freedom and brotherhood of ancient kinship society. At the end of his life, in the drafts of his famous letter to Vera Zasulich, he quoted Morgan's words in support of the view that Communism would be "a revival in a superior form" of an archaic type of society.[103]

The difference between the Russian populists and Marx in their respective idealizations of the "archaic society" can be defined axiologically. For the populists the archaic social structures were mostly a paragon of equality while Marx saw them as embodying an important aspect of freedom—freedom as human control over human products. Engels, in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and State,* did not hesitate to conclude that in this respect "barbarity" was definitely superior to civilization. In ancient societies, he argued, "production was carried on within the most restricted limits, but—the producers exercised control over their own product. This was the immense advantage of barbarian production that was lost with the advent of civilization; and to win it back on the basis of the enormous control man now exercises over the forces of nature, and of free association that is now possible, will be the task of the next generations."[104]

The "immense advantage" defined in this quotation was the advantage of the self-sufficient natural economy over all forms of exchange: "When the producers no longer directly consumed their product, but let it go out of their hands in the course of exchange, they lost control over it. They no longer knew what became of it, and the possibility arose that the product might some day be turned against the producers, used as a means of exploiting and oppressing them."[105] These words also belong to Engels, but the extreme prejudice against exchange expressed in them was not his own invention. In Marx's *Capital* this prejudice was expressed with such force that many socialist theorists, including such first-rate scholars as Otto Neurath and Otto Bauer, came to see the socialist economy as a natural economy in macro-scale.[106] To be sure, Marx and Engels—once more in accordance with the idea of self-enriching alienation—combined their hostility towards exchange with a clear awareness that what they saw as its negative aspect was a necessary price for developing human capacities through "universal intercourse." Nevertheless, "free," unplanned exchange was in their eyes not an expression of freedom but a denial of it. True freedom in the economic sphere was conceived by them as antithetical to the liberal "economic freedom"; it was defined not as

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"freedom of selling and buying" but as conscious control over production and distribution. And from *this* point of view the primitive natural economy could indeed be seen as superior to commodity production and monetary exchange, as deserving to be restored on a higher level and, in a sense, as providing a ready-made model for the socialist future.

An extreme, almost caricatured expression of this view is to be found in Marx's parallel between the socialist economy of the future and the economic activities of Robinson Crusoe.[107] In both cases there is a single subject of economic activity (although in one case it is simply an individual, while in the other it is a collective endowed with a single will and working in accordance with a settled plan);[108] in neither case do different kinds of labor involve the existence of different, independent subjects of economic activity, exchanging their products "privately" and "freely," that is, without concern about the common good and without any rational planning. Owing to this we can say that under socialism "all the characteristics of Robinson's labor are repeated."[109]

But how to ensure that "freely associated individuals" will really act like a single individual? The very idea of such a possibility presupposed two rather risky assumptions. First, that all individuals could be raised (or, rather, reduced) to their common species essence; second, that the human essence can be fully expressed in each individual. The first of these assumptions was for Marx an axiom: he never ceased to believe that all humans, as members of the same species, have basically the same interests and that only their division into different classes prevents them from acting in accordance with a rational consensus. But he was becoming more and more skeptical about the second assumption, involving his early vision of human liberation, as developed in the period of the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* and the *German Ideology*. As we remember, in this early period he believed in the total de-alienation of humankind through the process of overcoming the division of labor; he even postulated the "transformation of labor into self-activity,"[110] since the very word "labor" meant for him, by then, alienated activity, the realm of unfreedom. Under socialism labor was to be de-alienated, that is, changed into diversified, comprehensive activity; "forced activity," laid upon individuals "through an exterior, arbitrary need" was to give way to work which would be a "free expression" of human life, and therefore a "free enjoyment of life."[111] The price to be paid for this final outcome was to be very high because it had to be prepared for by capitalist industrialization, that, is by the

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alienated development of human capacities, leading to "complete dehumanization."[112] But the species capacities of humankind, developed at the cost of human beings as individuals, were to be de-alienated, through "the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves."[113] Thus the division of labor was to be overcome but without losing its achievements in mastering nature; this, of course, presupposed the re-appropriation of the species capacities of humankind by individual human beings, in other words, raising human beings as individuals to the level achieved by humankind as a species. A more optimistic utopia could hardly be imagined. Humankind was to continue its Promethean mission of subjugating nature while, at the same time, doing this without the Puritan work ethic, without subjugating itself to rigorous discipline; productivity was to continue to increase while, at the same time, becoming transformed into free creativity, free enjoyment of life.

In Marx's later works this ultra-optimistic vision gave way to a more realistic conception and one more in agreement with the harsh laws of material production as described in *Capital*. Marx apparently came to the conclusion that freedom as "mastery over collective fate," that is, as conscious, rational control, allowing humans to avoid the humiliating dependence on both blind necessity and chance, is not compatible with replacing labor with free self-expression and self-enjoyment; that rational planning cannot go together with the abolition of the division of labor, i.e., with allowing individuals to do whatever they want and to develop themselves in all possible directions. Hence it was necessary for him to reconcile himself to the division of labor, and this was what he did by distinguishing between the division of labor in society, which presupposed uncontrolled, decentralized economic activity of different, independent producers, and the division of labor in the factory, based upon a settled plan and a strict control of everybody's work. The first he continued to condemn; the second he posited as a model for the socialist society of the future.

Unlike Engels, Marx was aware that conscious, rational control over the economy, even if it really enabled humans to steer their history and to avoid all of the unintended consequences of their actions, cannot be equated with freedom in the fullest sense of the term. He continued to dream about freedom as unrestrained self-realization, although he ceased to believe that it could be achieved in the economic sphere. Hence he sharply divided human life into two spheres, productive and non-productive, stressing that freedom could not be real-

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ized in both of them. This new conception assumed that "in fact the realm of freedom actually begins only where labor which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production." In the sphere of production, freedom

> can only consist in the socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human capacities which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite.[114]

In other words: the maximal development of productive forces and their subjection to conscious, planned control is now merely a *condition* of authentic freedom. It is an indispensable condition, as only it will enable men to acquire the material means and the free time needed to satisfy comprehensive, "abundant," truly human needs. The realization of true freedom—the free development of human powers—depends, however, on the knowledge of how to utilize those means and that time. In this matter Marx represented an exaggerated optimism which he did not even attempt to justify. He was convinced that in a welfare society—of course in a *socialist* welfare society, since he did not foresee the possibility of mass welfare under capitalist conditions—artificial needs, or those degrading man, would not appear. The Promethean vision of man as creator, ever-present in his works, inclined him to the belief that the achievement of an objective opportunity for free, comprehensive and creative development of personality would be fully utilized by man and that the victory of socialism would be followed, speaking the language of his earlier works, by an increasingly perfect fulfillment of human essence in his existence, by an increasingly rapid diminution of the difference between "true man" and "man really existing."

But this is only one side, or one face, of Marx's utopia: its humanistic face, over-optimistic, of course, but not harmful. If Marx's conception of freedom could be reduced to the idea of shortening the working day in order to release man's free creativity, it would have been very easy to absolve him from all responsibility for totalitarian

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interpretations of his legacy. Unfortunately, we must remember that the other side of Marx's conception is his firm conviction, a conviction central to his entire philosophy of human history, that the necessary condition for "truly human freedom" is "freedom in the realm of necessity," that is total control over the economy, full suppression of the freedom to produce, to exchange and to consume. Marx changed his views on the division of labor, but money, free exchange and production for sale by autonomous economic agents—in other words, the self-regulating mechanisms of the market—remained for him anathema. He modelled his vision of the division of labor under socialism on what he himself called the "despotism of the workshop," or "the organization of the labor of society in accordance with an approved and authoritative plan."[115] What this meant in fact was nothing less than abandoning the hope that under socialism individuals would become "universally developed," and would thus restore on a higher level their original "wholeness," while it meant increasing, at the same time, the necessity of authoritarian control. Engels (as usual) made this even more explicit. He stressed the importance of the principle of authority in all social organization and especially in industry, where there is virtually no place for individual autonomy.[116] The victory of socialism will not change this at all. Quite irrespective of how and by whom the decisions will be made—by "a delegate placed at the head of each branch of labor" or by a majority vote—"the will of the single individual will always have to subordinate itself, which means that questions are settled in an authoritative way. . . . Wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself."[117]

This says much about socialism as an "association of free producers," but still not enough. Neither Marx nor Engels proved capable of imagining the terrible consequences of attempts to realize their utopian vision of a totally controlled economy. If such an economy were to develop in accordance with a rational, authoritative plan, it would have been necessary to suppress not only individual freedom but also group freedom, hence all forms of direct democracy, although the ideal of direct democracy—as embodied, for instance, in the Greek polis and other forms of "ancient society"—was otherwise so close to Marx's and Engels's hearts. If unintended results were to be avoided, the control from above would have to be truly all-embracing and ruthless. If market forces, including money, were to be totally eliminated, the freedom to define individual needs through buying or not buying would have to give way to authoritarian decisions by the plan-

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ning authorities on what people really need, in what quantities, in what order, and so forth. And since such decisions always depend on a common scale of values, implementing them would not have been possible without strenuous efforts to create, or impose, an intellectual and moral unanimity. The rest is only too well-known.

Comprehensive Planning or Participatory Democracy?

For many decades Marx's "scientific socialism" was understood as antithetical to utopian blueprints for the future. In other words, it was believed that Marx and Engels, in contrast to utopian socialists, had no "ideal of the future"; their theory provided scientific knowledge of the inexorable laws of history, not a utopian fantasy. It was repeated endlessly that "scientific socialists" do not indulge in ahistorical thinking, do not share the eighteenth-century belief in the omnipotence of rational legislation and do not claim to possess a ready-made vision of the future.[118] This was, of course, powerfully endorsed by Engels in his *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. In comparison with this classical treatise, Marx's critique of utopian socialism was less systematic and, perhaps, less consistent as well. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that he too strongly disliked being seen as a "utopian," that is, as somebody committed to an aprioristic, ready-made ideal of the future. In his view "utopian" tendencies were deeply foreign to the mature working class. In his analysis of the Paris Commune he wrote: "The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready-made Utopias to introduce *par decret du peuple* [by decree of the people]. They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant."[119]

In fact, as I have tried to show, Marx's thinking was strongly permeated by utopianism. In spite of his denials, he *was* committed to a definite ideal of the future. True, this ideal was not described in detail; nonetheless, it was clear enough and easily recognizable: Marx's socialism was to consist of the abolition of commodity production and monetary exchange.[120] Today this most essential truth about Marxism is not widely known, even among people who call themselves Marx-

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ists. In the West this is mostly due to the widespread ignorance of the genuine Marxist tradition; in the countries of "really existing socialism," where commodity production still exists, the most enlightened and open-minded Marxists do everything possible to forget about this dreadful dogma belonging to classical Marxism, and even the hard-liners, despite their fear of the self-regulating market, are no longer interested in keeping alive the spirit of Marx's economic utopianism. But historical facts cannot be changed. We must agree with Ernest Mandel, who has given the following summary of Marx's view on the nature of socialist economy:

> Marx and the Marxist tradition are unambiguous on the subject: socialism, as "the first phase of communism," is characterized by the absence of commodity production. . . . For Marx and Marxists, there are only two basically different ways in which needs and resources can be balanced in any given society: either *a priori* in a conscious way (regardless of whether this is done democratically or despotically, based upon prejudice, magic rites, religion, habit, tradition, or based upon the application of science, whether it is "irrational" or "rational"); or *a posteriori* through the operation of the law of value, i.e., objective laws operating behind the backs of "economic agents." Schematically, and in the last analysis, *a priori* adaptation of social resources to social needs implies social property of the means of production and labor which is directly recognized as social labor. *A posteriori* adaptation of social resources to social needs implies private property, implies labor which is spent in the form of private labor and which is not immediately and directly recognized as social labor.[121]

This quotation enables us to gain a firm grasp of two additional aspects of the Marxian ideal of socialism: its backward-looking aspect, evident in its admiration for primitive societies in which "conscious regulation" balanced needs against resources in accordance with tradition, religion or even magic rites and prejudices; and, secondly, its theoretical compatibility with both democracy and despotism.

Democracy in this context means, of course, not liberal democracy but a variety of collectivism, strong enough to subordinate the life-plans and life-goals of all individuals to one collective plan and one set of collective goals. In other words, the democracy described by Marx in his early essay "On the Jewish Question": government by the people unrestricted by individual rights, offering freedom as participation, but not freedom as individual autonomy. In later years Marx described this form of democracy as suitable for the "dictatorship of the

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proletariat."[122] He was pretty vague in defining the latter but Engels was right in seeing its first historical embodiment in the Paris Commune.[123] He criticized the Commune for insufficient revolutionary resolve but, at the same time, highly praised it as a form of direct participatory democracy, combining legislative and executive functions, getting rid of bourgeois parliamentarianism and of "the sham independence" of judicial functionaries, suppressing the standing army and substituting for it the armed people.[124] He did not fail to stress that this direct form of people's rule differed profoundly from representative democracy and did not hesitate to praise, in this context, such archaic detail as the "formal instruction" of representatives by their constituents.[125]

Understandably, Marx was especially enthusiastic about the Commune's efforts to abolish capitalist private property and thus to transform the means of production "into mere instruments of free and associated labor." He saw these efforts as leading towards Communism, because only Communism could give a sound basis for a principle of cooperative production: "If cooperative production is not to remain a sham and a snare; if it is to supersede the Capitalist system; if united cooperative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of Capitalist production—what else, gentlemen, would it be but Communism, 'possible' Communism?"[126]

But how was it possible to combine direct participatory democracy, i.e., the most decentralized and, indeed, anarchic form of decision-making, with comprehensive rational planning and efficient control over production and distribution? There is no doubt that Marx's ideal was *democratic* planning, that is, planning as rational decision-making based upon consensus. However, as I have tried to show, it is equally indubitable that the inner logic of his idea of a planned economy led him to accept the authoritarian principle in the sphere of material production, to visualize the society of the future as "one immense factory," and thus to propose that the "realm of freedom" begins where labor determined by necessity ceases. In this way, in contrast to some "Western Marxists" of our century, he abandoned the optimistic view that at a certain level of general affluence labor could be transformed into free self-activity. He stressed that human wants constantly increase and, therefore, exert a constant pressure on human productive activity, irrespective of the level of development of productive forces. "Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to

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maintain and reproduce life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase."[127] Thus, people will never free themselves from the severe discipline of productive labor. On the contrary: in this sphere freedom can consist only in instrumental rationality, enabling people to maximize the efficiency of their productive efforts and to bring them under conscious control. As we know, Marx readily acknowledged that this means only "freedom within the realm of necessity," and not "the true realm of freedom," i.e., "that development of human energy which is an end in itself."[128] But it is obvious that freedom as conscious control over the economy was for him not only a necessary means of shortening the working day and thus making room for the "true realm of freedom." He saw it also as liberating people from the rule of "blind forces," and thus as a value in itself and a foundation of the entire edifice of freedom.

If so, we can clearly see that Marx's view of the nature of the socialist economy was not easily compatible with his ideal of democracy. Productivity, efficiency and rational control can hardly be achieved through direct universal participation. Even if we assume, as Marx did, that in a classless society the interests of all people are basically the same, it does not follow that their capacity for rationally understanding these interests is also the same. Hence the inevitable tension between freedom as "rational, conscious control" and freedom as universal participation in decision-making. And there cannot be any doubt that the inner logic of the Marxian conception of freedom demanded that, in the case of conflict, control over the economy, as the very essence of socialism, could not be sacrificed for the sake of popular demands, since the latter, after all, might be chaotic, self-contradictory and incompatible with economic rationality.

To be sure, historical experience has made it clear that authoritarian control over the economy does not provide really effective remedies against the obvious shortcomings of decentralized democratic planning. And there are no reasons to believe that an authoritarian controlled economy would prove superior to developed market economies in increasing the productivity of labor and thereby enabling people to shorten their working-day. True, this may be seen as merely an empirical or technical question. It is arguable (although rather questionable) that an improved model of a centralized economy could perhaps be devised, and that such a model, if consistently applied, would

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provide a more rational solution to certain problems (for instance, that of wastefulness) which otherwise could not be properly solved. To put it differently, a perfect model of authoritarian central planning is imaginable, that is to say, logically conceivable (in contrast to the self-contradictory conception of applying the principle of rational planning to a complex industrial society in the context of direct participatory democracy). But this purely theoretical possibility does not remove the intrinsic incompatibility between the principle of comprehensive planning, as a means of achieving "mastery over collective fate," and individual freedom. On the contrary: the more perfect the model of such planning, the less room it leaves for individual life-plans and the individual pursuit of happiness.

The main problem is that Marx saw this in a completely different way. In his view the worst form of unfreedom was dependence on things, not on the will of other people; this is, as we saw, why he did not hesitate to state that reified human relationships, characteristic of capitalism, were more destructive of freedom than are different forms of personal dependence in pre-capitalist social formations. Taking into account all the cruel restrictions on human freedom which obtained under feudalism, or in "the ancient society," this was indeed a very bold and provocative claim. Such a claim could have been made only by a man for whom it was utterly important to belie the liberal conception of freedom, as embellishing capitalism and thereby serving the interests of bourgeois exploiters; a man who wanted at all costs, even at the cost of simple common sense, to define freedom differently—not only in opposition to coercive commands or prohibitions, but rather, and above all, in opposition to the blind force of things and reified (*sachlicher*) human relationships, as embodied in the quasi-natural mechanism of the capitalist market. This was precisely the case with Marx, his scale of values and his political aims. No wonder, then, that subordination to the conscious and rational decisions of the planning authorities, acting in the name of all humans as "species beings," was for him a form of promoting the cause of human freedom, while subordination to self-regulating market forces, symbolized by money, represented nothing less than the utter degradation of human beings as free, conscious agents. From this point of view capitalism, the most developed form of monetary exchange economy, appeared as a system especially destructive of human freedom. It was so because the world of universal objective dependence created by capitalism reduced human beings, including members of the ruling class, to mere puppets, ruled by their own products and accepting this humiliating state of affairs as their fate.[129]

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Marx vs. Simmel

There was a certain logic and a certain truth to this view. But there was also a certain blindness and a complete inability to see the other side of the coin. To render justice to this "other side" it would be useful to compare Marx's view of the relationship between capitalism and freedom with the relevant views of the post-Marxian sociologist Georg Simmel, the author of *The Philosophy of Money.*

Like Marx, Simmel concentrated on the connection between freedom and the monetary exchange economy, culminating in modern capitalism. His views, however, are symmetrically opposite to those of Marx: his analysis is parallel to Marx's presentation of the transition from personal dependence to objective dependence, but his value judgments and, consequently, his conclusions concerning freedom are completely different.

While Marx saw money as the loathsome symbol of universal alienation and enslavement by things, as a power externalizing the capacities of humanity and thereby developing them at the cost of the utter degradation of human individuals, Simmel concentrated on showing the immense role of monetary exchange in winning and securing individual freedom. Subordination to individual personalities, he reasoned, is always much worse than subordination to a strictly objective organization.[130] The growth of individual freedom in history can be measured by the increasing depersonalization of human obligations. Direct slavery is the most personal and most complete form of dependence. The bondsman who owes his master specific services limited in time is freer than a slave but less free than a manorial serf who owes his landlord payment in kind, and the latter is less free than a peasant who can replace payment in kind by money payment. This is so because payment in kind is still a form of personal bondage, while money payment is "the form most congruent with personal freedom."[131] "The lord of the manor who can demand a quantity of beer or poultry or honey from a serf thereby determines the activity of the latter in a certain direction. But the moment he imposes merely a money levy the peasant is free, insofar as he can decide whether to keep bees or cattle or anything else."[132] The replacement of natural services by monetary payments is an increase of freedom for both sides, since a person receiving capital has much more freedom of choice than a person entitled to specific personal services.[133] Thus, it is precisely the abstract, impersonal quality of money, as well as its "magic" capacity to change everything into everything, which makes the money economy a powerful factor for personal liberation.

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Like exchange in general, Simmel continues, monetary exchange does not necessarily mean taking something away; there are cases similar to intellectual exchange, where "each is mutually and equally enriched by the others."[134] This greatly reduces the human tragedy of competition. In contrast to the simple taking-away or gift, exchange "presupposes an objective appraisal, consideration, mutual acknowledgment."[135] Exchange is a wonderful means for combining justice with changes in ownership and its aims are best served by money, a means of exchange characterized by divisibility and unlimited convertibility.[136] Owing to this, a "money economy is able to increase individual liberty to its fullest extent, that is to release it from that primary form of social values in which one person has to be deprived of what the other receives."[137]

Simmel was, of course, fully aware that the developed money economy develops our needs and therefore greatly and constantly increases our mutual dependence. "Compared with modern man," he wrote, "the member of a traditional or primitive economy is dependent only upon a minimum of other persons."[138] He stressed, however, that dependence on many makes room for independence. In the market economy human dependence, or rather interdependence, is greater in scope but looser and, above all, depersonalized. "While at an earlier stage man paid for the smaller number of his dependencies with the narrowness of personal relations, often with their personal irreplaceability, we are compensated for the great quantity of our dependencies by the indifference towards the respective persons and by our liberty to change them at will. And even though we are much more dependent on the whole of society through the complexity of our needs on the one hand, and the specialization of our abilities on the other, than are primitive people who could make their way through life with their very narrow isolated group, we are remarkably independent of every *specific* member of this society. . . . This is the most favorable situation for bringing about inner independence, the feeling of individual self-sufficiency."[139] This independence should not be confused with indifference and isolation; it involves distance but not complete alienation from each other: "If every human relationship consists of elements of closeness and distance, then independence signifies that distance has reached a maximum, but the elements of attraction can just as little disappear altogether as can the concept of 'left' exist without that of 'right.'"[140]

As we can see, in all of these respects Simmel's standpoint was diametrically opposed to that of Marx. While Simmel shared the classical

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liberal view that the worst form of unfreedom is the personal dependence characteristic of pre-capitalist formations, Marx thought that the worst enslavement of the human species, as collective subject, occurs with the objectification and reification of human relationships brought about by capitalism. Thus for Simmel depersonalization meant freedom, while for Marx it meant the suppression of it. Consequently Simmel welcomes the money economy as promoting personal liberation, increasing freedom of both the obligor and the obligee, while for Marx money symbolized mutual alienation and enslavement, the destruction of communal ties and their replacement by universal mutual dependence. Marx did not really appreciate the greater individual mobility and choice which resulted from the marketization of the economy; rather, he saw it as making individuals more dependent on mere chance and stressed that the capitalist world market develops at the cost of fragmenting and subjugating individuals. True, he treated this as a necessary and ultimately beneficial process, but dialectical reasoning, which supported this conclusion, did not affect his adamant hostility towards the free exchange of commodities: this is why the monetary exchange economy ultimately had to be replaced by "directly social production." For Simmel money transactions involved the mutual acknowledgment of independent subjects; for Marx they symbolized subjugation to blind, quasi-natural forces. What Simmel appreciated as interpersonal distance, diminishing collective pressure and thereby creating space for individual freedom, Marx saw as mutual estrangement, transforming human beings into isolated egoists and thus alienating them from their human nature. And if "freedom means living according to one's own nature"[141] (a definition which both Simmel and Marx could accept), the alienation from human nature amounts, of course, to the loss of freedom.

The main difference between Marx and Simmel, as far as the problem of freedom is concerned, boils down to their different assessments of the role and meaning of reification and of man's dependence on things in general. Like Marx, Simmel paid much attention to the processes of objectification and reification but, in contrast to Marx, treated them as furthering the cause of freedom. He wrote:

> Thus we can observe the distinctive parallel movement during the last three hundred years, namely on the one hand the laws of nature, the material order of things, the objective necessity of events emerge more clearly and distinctly, while on the other we see the emphasis upon the independent individuality, upon personal freedom, upon independence (*Fursichsein*) in relation to all external and natural forces becoming more

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> and more acute and increasingly stronger. . . . Individual freedom grows to the extent that nature becomes more objective and more real for us and displays the peculiarities of its own order so that this freedom increases with the objectivization and depersonalization of the economic universe.[142]

Equally important is the difference between Marx's and Simmel's conceptions of the role of money in changing the relationship between man and his property. Marx distinguished between capitalist private property and the property of the immediate producers, the latter based upon personal labor and therefore constituting, as it were, an extension of human beings. From this point of view it was natural to see the development of the money economy as bringing about the dehumanization of property, the expropriation of direct producers and the alienation of laborers from their products. Simmel saw it in a different light: he thought that money must be credited with making the owner *independent of his property*. Possessing a garden or a farm makes the owner dependent on his property, while possessing money makes him free to do whatever he wants to do. Similarly, "humanized" and "personalized" possession of a specific object determines the consciousness of the owner to a much greater extent than does possession of something abstract, impersonal and easily convertible. In this context Simmel directly referred to "Marx's question of whether the consciousness of men determines their being or their being determines their consciousness."[143] His answer to this question was: "The more fundamentally and intensively the possession is really owned, that is made useful and enjoyed, then the more distinct and determining will be the effects upon the internal and external nature of the subjects. Thus there is a chain from being to having and from having back to being."[144] Money dissolves this dependency on things, creating the possibility of "the independence of being from possessing and of possessing from being," thus increasing human freedom in relation to the world of things.[145]

Simmel's philosophy of money also develops the idea of a causal relationship between the development of the money economy and the rise of modern rationalism. Money, he argued, "is concerned only with what is common to all, i.e., with the exchange value which reduces all quality and individuality to a purely quantitative level." The same is true of rationalism, and because of this the "money economy and the domination of the intellect stand in the closest relationship to one another."[146] As a representative of *Lebensphilosophie,* deeply con-

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cerned with the fate of the irrational, qualitative elements of human life, Simmel deplored this development; as an intellectual, however, he welcomed it and described it as an increase in freedom. As is known, similar problems are dealt with in Max Weber's theory of the development of Western rationalism—a theory putting stress not on monetary exchange but on progressive bureaucratization and seeing the future in terms of an "iron cage," leaving little place for individual freedom. This pessimism concerning the fate of freedom in the "rationalized" industrial societies deeply influenced the Western Marxists who, following Georg Lukács, tried to identify Weber's "rationalization" with Marx's reification."[147] But Marx's theory of reification was levelled first of all against commodity production, that is, against the market economy, and by no means against the idea of rational regulation of all spheres of life (i.e., not against rationalization in Max Weber's sense). Unlike the thinkers of the Frankfurt school, Marx protested against reification while remaining faithful to the tradition of Western rationalism. He accused capitalism of *insufficiently* rationalizing social life and allotted to socialism the mission of bringing the process of rationalization to its logical end, through the elimination of the money economy and the transformation of society into one economic subject. The idea of conscious rational control was in his eyes a remedy *against* reification. He failed, however, to explain how such control could be exercised by "freely associated producers" and how it was possible to save "rational control" from degenerating into "bureaucratic control."

The contrast between Marx's and Simmel's views, sharpest in their respective theories of the relationship between freedom and monetary exchange, stems ultimately from their different value-judgments about what constitutes the greatest violation of freedom: personal dependence or objective dependence, the imposition of an alien, arbitrary will or the domination by things which prevents people from controlling their collective fate. Historical experience, as well as empirical studies of social psychology, provide plenty of arguments in favor of Simmel's judgment. It is not even necessary to involve in this connection the totalitarian temptation inherent in the Marxian conception of freedom, or the testimony of those people who have experienced totalitarian tyranny. Hatred of personal dependence, of being directed by others, a greater readiness to accept objective or quasi-objective necessity than to be obedient to arbitrary prohibitions and commands is, at a certain level of development, a universal human phenomenon. In patriarchal conditions of a pre-modern society personal dependence may be acceptable, or even loved, but the movement towards individ-

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ualization and rationalization of consciousness makes it irrevocably and increasingly incompatible with the feeling of freedom. To deny this universal truth amounts to a deliberate challenge to the accumulated experience of humankind.

Does it follow that Marx's conception of freedom should be dismissed as entirely false and irrelevant? I do not think so. It is false and dangerous if absolutized and used as a weapon against liberal-democratic values, but it would be difficult to deny that it also contains many profound and critical insights into the nature of those modern industrial societies which enjoy the benefits of political freedom and developed market economies. In such societies ignorance of Marxism, including Marx's theory of freedom, would amount to a dangerous complacency, although uncritical acceptance of it would certainly lead to even more dangerous results. Hence it is understandable that many nonconformist Western intellectuals see in Marxism above all a humanist ideal of man as a real "master of his fate" and a powerful source of inspiration for the critique of reified social conditions. But even more understandable is the fact that the nonconformist intellectuals of Eastern Europe are inclined to see in Marxism mainly an instrument of ideological repression, legitimizing power that is exercised against the popular will and providing arguments for the suppression of political and economic freedom.

It has often been said that liberalism is a "Eurocentric" doctrine which absolutizes some Western ideas but is totally irrelevant for the rest of the world. There may be some truth in this, if liberalism is understood as an ideology justifying a certain strategy of economic development—a strategy which has proved successful in the West but has failed to produce similar results elsewhere. But even so, it does not follow, in my view, that the liberal conception of freedom is suitable only for the West. On the contrary: it is especially needed in those countries which have begun the modernization of their economies under the auspices of authoritarian or totalitarian governments. It would be truly arrogant to claim that liberalism is good only for wealthy Westerners. Arguably the reverse is true: as a conception of freedom liberalism is of universal significance, while the relevance of the Marxian conception is limited to the democratic and affluent countries of the West.[148] In other words, Marx's critique of liberal democracy and commodity production may serve as a freedom-increasing force mostly, if not exclusively, in the liberal-democratic countries, that is, countries in which the liberal conception of freedom is firmly institutionalized and which, for that reason, can afford to criticize its shortcomings. These shortcomings are very real and, therefore, the le-

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gitimacy of Western Marxism as a current of thought is beyond question. But the Western Marxists should be aware that the *uncritical* use of Marx's ideas, under the comfortable shelter of liberal democracy, can amount to a selfish and short-sighted indulgence in political and intellectual irresponsibility.

NOTES

1. F. A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 11–12.
2. This view of Marx, characteristic of the "classical Marxism" of the Second International, has come to be radically questioned by a number of thinkers who claimed that it was based upon Engels's erroneous interpretation of Marx's philosophy. The first thinker who developed this "anti-Engelsian" interpretation of Marx was the Pole, Stanislaw Brzozowski (1878–1911; see L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism,* vol. 2 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981], 215–39). The best known classical text interpreting Marx in this way is Georg Lukács's *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (1923).

   For a comprehensive presentation of the "Anti-Engelsian" interpretation of Marx, see Norman Levine, *The Tragic Deception: Marx contra Engels* (Oxford-Santa Barbara, 1975).
3. See A. Walicki, "The Marxian Conception of Freedom" in Z. Pelczynski and J. Gray, eds., *Conceptions of Liberty in Political Philosophy* (London: Athlone Press, 1984), 217–42, and A. Walicki, "Marx and Freedom," *The New York Review of Books,* Nov. 24, 1983: 50–55.
4. The importance of such an understanding of Marxism has been emphasized in recent years by some American scholars. Thus, Allen W. Wood argues that freedom and self-actualization, as values directly dependent on the development of labor, have a transcultural significance, while justice has a meaning or content only within a given mode of production (see A. W. Wood, "Marx on Right and Justice" in *Marx, Justice and History,* ed. M. Cohen, T. Nagel and T. Scanlon [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980], 121–22). A similar view is ably developed in G. G. Brenkert's *Marx's Ethics of Freedom* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983).
5. See A. Schaff, *Alienation as a Social Phenomenon* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), 24–29.
6. Kolakowski, vol. 1, 116.
7. K. Marx, *Selected Writings,* ed. David McLellan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 89.
8. K. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* vol. 5 (New York: International Publishers, 1975ff.), 80.
9. Such a notion of freedom was, of course, deeply rooted in Hegelianism.

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It has been rightly observed that in Marx's critique of Hegelian legal philosophy "le veritable ennemie de Marx, c'est le liberalisme, et non pas la *Rechtsphilosophie*." G. Haarscher, *L'ontologie de Marx* (Bruxelles 1980), 88.

10. K. Marx, *Capital* vol. 1 (New York: International Publisher, 1984), 84.
11. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, 78–79.
12. *Ibid.*, 49.
13. As has been done by Lukács in his *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*. See in G. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), the chapters on "Reification" and on "The Changing Function of Historical Materialism."
14. Marx, *Selected Writings*, 103.
15. *Ibid.*, 103–4.
16. *Ibid.*, 105.
17. *Ibid.*, 94.
18. *Ibid.*, 95.
19. *Ibid.*, 94.
20. *Ibid.*, 93.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, 104.
23. *Ibid.*, 81–82.
24. *Ibid.*, 80.
25. *Ibid.*, 78–79.
26. *Ibid.*, 79.
27. *Ibid.*, 89.
28. *Ibid.*, 110.
29. *Ibid.*, 84.
30. *Ibid.*, 88.
31. *Ibid.*, 89.
32. *Ibid.*, 96.
33. *Ibid.*, 88–89.
34. *Ibid.*, 95.
35. *Ibid.*, 92.
36. *Ibid.*, 91.
37. *Ibid.*, 89.
38. See Marx's Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy* (*Selected Writings*, 390).
39. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, 37.
40. *Ibid.*, 38.
41. *Ibid.*, 43.
42. *Ibid.*, 32.
43. *Ibid.*, 33.
44. *Ibid.*, 35.
45. *Ibid.*, 47–48, 51.
46. *Ibid.*, 51–52.
47. *Ibid.*, 80–81.
48. Cf. Brenkert, 88–89.

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49. Cf. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* vol. 5, 83.
50. Cf. R. C. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 63.
51. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* vol. 5, 81.
52. *Ibid.,* 78.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.,* 47.
55. *Ibid.,* 87.
56. *Ibid.,* 438.
57. Kolakowski, vol. 1, 161.
58. *Ibid.,* 161–62.
59. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* vol. 5, 80.
60. F. A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty,* vol. 2 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 30.
61. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* vol. 5, 80.
62. Kolakowski, "The Myth of Human Self-Identity" in *The Socialist Idea: A Reappraisal,* ed. L. Kolakowski and Stuart Hampshire (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1974), 33.
63. The quoted words belong to G. Simmel. See G. Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms,* ed. D. N. Levine (Chicago and London 1971), 169.
64. Kolakowski, "The Myth of Human Self-Identity," 35.
65. K. Marx, *Grundrisse,* trans. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 157–58.
66. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* vol. 5, 78–79.
67. Marx, *Grundrisse,* 164.
68. *Ibid.,* 164–65.
69. *Ibid.,* 165.
70. *Ibid.,* 158.
71. *Ibid.,* 158–59.
72. Marx's letter to Kugelman, 11 July 1868, in *Selected Writings,* 525.
73. *Grundrisse,* 159.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Grundrisse,* 160. The word "Versachlichung" means literally "reification."
76. In this sense, F. A. Hayek pointed out that market is a sort of "discovery procedure" and that the "dispersed knowledge" contained in its self-regulating mechanisms is infinitely greater than the amount of information that any one person or agency can possess. Cf. F. A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty,* vol. 2, 71.
77. *Grundrisse,* 161.
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.*
80. *Grundrisse,* 161–62.
81. Quoted from Marx's *Selected Writings,* 390.
82. Marx used in such contexts the word "Vermögen."
83. *Grundrisse,* 162.

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84. Don Lavoie, *National Economic Planning: What is Left?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1985), 76.
85. *Grundrisse*, 157.
86. Cf. G. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. T. Bottomore and D. Frisby (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 313.
87. The expression Isaiah Berlin used in his essay "Historical Inevitability." See Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).
88. This can already be seen in his polemics against Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847).
89. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 (New York 1984), 49.
90. *Ibid.*, 336–37.
91. *Ibid.*, 337.
92. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 6, 184.
93. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 136.
94. *Ibid.*, 144.
95. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 96.
96. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. 3, 17.
97. See F. Mehring, *Die deutsche Sozialdemocratie: Ihre Geschichte und ihre Lehre* (Brema 1879), 296–97. As is known, in later years, Mehring changed his views and became a Marxist.
98. Cf. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 91. In the quoted edition the word "Fremdheit" is translated quite wrongly as "independence." Terrell Carver, who quotes this passage from *Capital* in his preface to Marx's "Notes on Adolph Wagner," has corrected this obvious error. See Marx, *Texts on Method*, ed. Terrell Carver (New York 1975), 171.
99. *Capital*, vol. 1, 81–82.
100. *Ibid.*, 77.
101. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, 78–79.
102. Quoted from K. Marx, *Pre-capitalist economic formations*, ed. E. J. Hobsbawm (London 1964), 140.
103. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. 3, 153–54.
    For an analysis of the drafts of Marx's letter to Zasulich see A. Walicki, *The Controversy over Capitalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 188–92; and T. Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and the Peripheries of Capitalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983). The latter book contains three introductions (by T. Shanin, by Haruki Wada, and by D. Sayer and P. Corrigan) and a selection of relevant texts, including the Marx-Zasulich correspondence.
104. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 278.
105. *Ibid.*, 279.
106. Many Soviet economists took up these views and continued to defend them even after the death of Stalin. See G. Temkin, *Karola Marksa obraz*

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gospodarki Komunistycznej (*Marx's Image of the Communist Economy*) (Warsaw 1962), esp. 266–301.

107. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 81.
108. *Ibid.*, 84.
109. *Ibid.*, 83.
110. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, 88. Raya Dunayevskaya comments: "So hostile was Marx to labor under capitalism, that at first he called, not for the 'Emancipation' of labor, but for its 'abolition.'" R. Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1982), 60.
111. Marx, *Selected Writings*, 122 ("On James Mill").
112. *Ibid.*, 93.
113. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, 87.
114. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3 (quoted ed.), 820.
115. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 337.
116. See Engels's "On Authority" in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, 377.
117. *Ibid.*
118. According to Engels, the "juridical world view," i.e., the belief in the omnipotence of rational legislation, was the classic worldview of the bourgeoisie. See F. Engels and K. Kautsky, "Juridical Socialism" in Piers Beirne (int.), *Politics and Society*, vol. 7, 1977, 204.
119. K. Marx, *Selected Writings*, 545 ("The Civil War in France").
120. This has been strongly emphasized by G. Temkin (see above, n 136). His book, in spite of its verbal declaration of loyalty to the party line, seems to have been written with the deliberate aim of exposing the presence and vitality of the utopian elements in Marxism.
121. E. Mandel, "Economics" in David McLellan, ed., *Marx: The First Hundred Years* (Oxford: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983), 234–35.
122. See Marx's letter to Weydemeyer of March 5, 1852 (in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. 1, 528).
123. In his preface to Marx's *Civil War in France* Engels wrote: "Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (*ibid.*, vol. 2, 189).
124. Marx, *Selected Writings*, 542.
125. *Ibid.*
126. *Ibid.*, 545.
127. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, 820.
128. *Ibid.*
129. Marx, *Grundrisse*, 158.
130. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, 285.
131. *Ibid.*, 285–86.
132. *Ibid.*, *286*.
133. *Ibid.*, 288–89.

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134. *Ibid.*, 289–90.
135. *Ibid.*, 291.
136. *Ibid.*, 292.
137. *Ibid.*, 294.
138. *Ibid.*, 297.
139. *Ibid.*, 298.
140. *Ibid.*, 299.
141. Cf. *ibid.*, 313.
142. *Ibid.*, 302–3.
143. *Ibid.*, 307.
144. *Ibid.*
145. *Ibid.*
146. G. Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" in Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, 326.

    A similar view was developed by Karl Mannheim, although he did not put special emphasis on the role of money. According to him, the genesis of the "formal quantitative approach" characteristic of modern rationalism was bound up with the search for forms of knowledge which "appealed to what is common in all human beings" and thus could be "knowable by all and communicable to all" (K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952], 149). The connection between this capacity for abstract, formal, quantitative thinking and the development of a money economy can easily be grasped.
147. For a comparative analysis of Marx's and Weber's views on "capitalism and freedom" see K. Löwith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx*, ed. T. Bottomore and W. Outhwaite (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982).
148. I mean, of course, Marx's conception of freedom, centered around problems of alienation and reification, not the Leninist theory of social and national liberation.

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Kai Nielsen

MARX AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT PROJECT

Marx, as much as Condorcet, was a figure of the Enlightenment, though coming, as he did, after its paradigmatic articulations, and particularly after Hegel and in the face of the counter-Enlightenment, we find an altered and arguably a more developed set of Enlightenment beliefs and conceptions. I shall first state some central features of a rather minimalist conception of Enlightenment humanism. I then shall indicate how Marx, while remaining a part of it, modified it. That completed, I shall characterize features which are canonical conceptions for Marx and indeed for the Marxist traditions and specify two of them, which might plausibly be thought, despite Marx's intent, to be at odds with his historically and contextually sensitive Enlightenment humanism. Finally, I shall seek to give a reading of those key conceptions which will show that they are not actually at odds with such a humanism but instead give the Enlightenment project a more realistic grounding.

Two central tenets should be stressed as minimal core elements of the Enlightenment. One is a conviction that reason (that is the resolute use of our reflective and creative intelligence), when rigorously and repeatedly applied in an impartial way, will lead to human emancipa-

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tion, yielding a society that will at last be humane and just, in which there will be extensive human flourishing. The second is a belief in universal human rights and the possibility of their actual instantiation in such a society. The Enlightenment was about building a new society with new, less irrational and more humane persons than most of us are now.

Marx's Enlightenment "Rationalism"

These two elements are importantly linked in the Enlightenment belief that the existence and content of human rights and moral behavior are to be determined by the use of reason—that is, by careful, empirically constrained and, in a broad sense, scientifically oriented inquiry and, as well, by reflective deliberation. We do not, on such a way of viewing things, just regard something as morally acceptable because it is the thing done, because we feel it in our blood, because of some revelation or religious authority or because it is required by some metaphysical system. We start with our considered convictions given to us in the traditions in which we come of age—where else would we start?—but we need not end there. What is morally acceptable, the Enlightenment has it, must stand up to the test of reason characterized broadly, as I have characterized it above. In a similar way, reason, *so characterized,* is the arbiter of what we are justified in believing are "facts" and of what it is otherwise reasonable to believe, including what it is reasonable to believe may become "facts."

Paradigmatic Enlightenment theorists (e.g. Condorcet and Voltaire) believed (as did Hume, a less paradigmatic representative) in the possibility and desirability of both a science of human nature and a science of society; they further believed (Hume more skeptically than the more paradigmatic figures) that with such sciences firmly in place, under the guidance of reason, there would be a more general human flourishing, emancipation and liberation.

Both Marx and Engels inherited these Enlightenment beliefs, as did the main figures of the Marxist tradition. For them, in contrast with the utopian socialists, it was vital that their socialism be scientific, though they construed "scientific" in the broad sense I utilized above in characterizing the Enlightenment project. Yet they differed from the paradigmatic figures of the Enlightenment in not construing a science of society on a model that is roughly Newtonian, in rejecting mechanistic materialism, in stressing the importance of the social and the his-

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torical, and in looking for deep forces of unreason working "behind our backs": forces which skew, in ways we would typically not be aware of, how we ascertain what is reasonable to believe and do and what is and is not morally acceptable.

Unlike paradigmatic Enlightenment figures, Marx did not seek to explain social and political phenomena, including various political and social ideas, in terms of conceptions drawn from individual psychology. Instead he explained such phenomena, including ideas, as pervasively being the outcome of social, political and ultimately of economic institutions. It was also important for Marx, as well as for later Marxists, to come to see things historically. Here Marx was, as everyone knows, deeply indebted to Hegel. Marx and Marxists very much wanted a science of history in order perspicuously to describe and explain what they took to be the development of human society as a whole, to show that it was indeed a development, to defend this development as progress (including, as Engels in particular stressed, moral progress) in which forms of society arise, stabilize themselves and eventually fall with the development of the productive powers of human beings. These productive powers answer ever more adequately to human needs and thus to our unfolding human powers and thus over time, as one social form replaces another, to our interest in reason.[1] This, of course, is a science of history with an emancipatory intent, which, if it actually comes to anything, would fulfill realistically—but only when the productive forces were sufficiently developed—key ideals of the Enlightenment. It would show us how we can come to have a humane and just social order answering to human needs. It gives us a sense, over historical time and cultural space, of what progress would look like. Moreover, it gives us a sense of human beings, as they develop their productive forces, making, sometimes consciously, their own history. As Marx stresses, they make, again and again, as the epochs unfold, their own history, though not just as they please, in ways that answer ever (when things are looked at in the long run) more adequately to their human needs. They seek to achieve a greater human flourishing and a better society, though they typically only retrospectively can clearly see what is to be done.

This conception, the methodological heuristic of which has been called historical materialism, gives us determinate grounds for endorsing the Enlightenment confidence in our capacity to use reason in an emancipatory way. But it has also been thought (by not a few—some crudely and some with nuance and sophistication) that this very historical materialism throws a spanner into the brave new conceptions of

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the Enlightenment. If historical materialism is true, then, according to many, morality totters and we human beings, if we see things clearly, cannot but be fatalistic in a way that Marx and indeed no figure of the Enlightenment was.[2] I shall return to this in the next section.

The Marxist Canon

Before turning to the next way in which Marx's theory, notwithstanding his intentions, may in fact run against the Enlightenment project, I want to set out what, in all that vast corpus, are the conceptions which are canonical to Marx and as well to Marxism. In speaking of them as "canonical," I mean to say that they are so central to Marxism and to an attempt to see in Marx a determinate theory and practice, that, if many of these conceptions were abandoned, we could no longer speak of Marx or of Marxists as having a distinctive and interesting social theory with a claim to saying some important things that may be approximately true. (I do not, of course, suggest that Marxism is only a social theory. That is plainly false for it is also a revolutionary doctrine with an associated conception of practice. In speaking of Marx as we do here it is vital to remember that, though he had extensive interests in theory, he was a dedicated revolutionary and his interests in theory were largely instrumental to his revolutionary commitments.)[3] Different Marxists and different interpreters of Marx give different readings to these core conceptions. Moreover, they place a different stress on various elements in them. However, the differences are not so endless that there is no recognizable core.

In speaking of the canonical core I speak of the fact that all the classical Marxists accept some form of dialectical method, some conception of the unity of theory and practice, some conception of human nature (that is, a conception of the needs and capacities of human beings and of the importance of this in human life), some conception of the distinctive importance of economics revolving around the labor theory of value and the historical functions of economics, a conception of historical materialism, of ideology and its critique, of class, class struggle, the necessity for revolution as the most probable outcome of class struggles, the transition from capitalism to socialism and of the future communist society along with the belief that certain historical factors, among them (and essentially) class struggle, will lead to its occurrence and, as well, a belief in the desirability of its occurrence.

However—and this fits well with Marx's own attitudes—the exis-

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tence of this canonical core to the contrary notwithstanding, Marxism is a developing body of theory and practice and is not fixed in stone. Some core elements may in time drop out and new ones may enter. Analytical Marxists, for example, tend to be suspicious of talk of dialectics beyond the banalities that we should steadfastly look for connections, take a wider view, pay attention to historical developments and have a diachronic as well as a synchronic point of view. There has been, even among Marxist economists, a widespread rejection of the labor theory of value and even some skepticism concerning historical materialism.[4] But all that notwithstanding, the list above constitutes the canonical core and, as Jon Elster has stressed, even those within the Marxist tradition who reject one or another part of the canon take these core conceptions very seriously indeed.[5] Anyone who can coherently regard herself as a Marxist, takes as her point of departure these core conceptions. Moreover, if too many of these core conceptions were jettisoned by a person who regarded herself as a Marxist then she could no longer coherently think of herself as a Marxist, though—and rightly so—"too many" cannot be defined with precision. Marxism, to use old-fashioned terminology, is an open-textured concept.

On the assumption that this canon delineates in a skeletal way the core of Marxism, I need next explain why it has been so widely believed that the acceptance of that core is incompatible with acceptance of key elements of Enlightenment humanism. The Enlightenment, in spite of its opposition to religious worldviews, shared with them a desire to moralize the world. The Enlightenment articulated doctrines of human rights and a conception of what a just and good society would look like, and it tried to use reason to lead us to that New Jerusalem. It has been maintained that Marxists who understand what they are about, and who accept the core I have just specified, need to realize that belief in human rights is mere bourgeois prejudice serving bourgeois class interests, that talk of a just and good society is ideological twaddle and that moralizing cannot bring about significant social change. A consistent Marxist is a Marxist anti-moralist, rejecting morality and moral theorizing as ideology and rejecting any claim to there being an objective moral standpoint or moral point of view. Such beliefs, it is said, are incompatible with a proper understanding of either historical materialism or the nature of class interests. Enlightenment aspirations for liberation cannot be achieved through morality and reason. Marx's own touching faith in Enlightenment values, some critics say, squares badly with core elements in his theory: par-

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ticularly with his concept of ideology, with his historical materialism and his belief in classes and distinctive class interests. Marx, in spite of his sometimes self, should have been a Marxist anti-moralist.[6]

Marxism and Morality

While not being a Marxist anti-moralist or indeed any kind of Marxist at all, Sidney Hook in his perceptive "The Enlightenment and Marxism" argues in a probing manner that Marx's understanding both of ideology and of historical materialism pose problems for his conception of socialism as a higher and better form of society and for his linked conception of a through and through democratic society which would protect human rights, not merely as formal rights, but as rights with some genuine substance.[7] Hook further argues that these problems remain, sometimes in exacerbated form, for the Marxist tradition. All this, of course, squares badly with the Enlightenment tradition.

Hook considers historical materialism first. Hook remarks that for Marx, "the development of society is conceived as being governed by immanent laws of economic production that determine the birth, development, and the death of all societies until man as a truly free agent comes to his own."[8] People make history: they are not, on Marx's view, hapless flotsam on the sea of history. But, given the truth of historical materialism, the fact that there are laws which "determine the development of society" makes it the case that we are not completely free to make and remake history at will. "The viable alternatives of action are determined by something external to our will. The range of alternatives is determined by institutions and habits of the past."[9] What kinds of social revolution can occur at a given time are of certain determinate sorts and whether they will in fact occur and can be sustained will depend not only on resolute class struggle but also on certain socio-economic preconditions. In spite of the efforts of Babeuf and other socialist thinkers and militants, the French Revolution had to be a bourgeois revolution and could not have come at that time to have had a socialist character. When it occurred, as Hook puts it, "the capitalist mode of production wasn't sufficiently developed to make possible the realization of the socialist ideals of organization and distribution."[10] This recognition of the historical boundedness of social ideas and of their dependence on the mode of production led to doctrines such as that "the real content of demands for justice reflected only the level of economic need of society."[11]

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Paradigmatic Enlightenment thinkers spoke in the strongest terms of the rights of man, and there is of course the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* of 1791. As Hook well puts it:

> . . . for the thinkers of the Enlightenment the existence of the rights of man was a common article of belief however they differed in their definitions, enumerations, and justifications of the belief. To be human meant that one was morally entitled to a certain mode of treatment, formally positive, concretely negative, at the hands of one's fellows. Whether human rights were ultimately grounded in God, nature, or human nature, whether they were justified by reason or utility, were matters of dispute; but there was no dispute that all individuals possessed these rights, that they were not created or granted by any society or state or government, whose moral right to existence could and should be judged by whether it furthered them or not. Where enumerated these rights expressed the moral conscience of the time revolted by injustice and cruelties.[12]

Marx and subsequent Marxists, as it has often been noted, would in the midst of political struggles, as a tactical or strategic matter, appeal to rights; but, Hook argues, this "practical strategy of natural rights is at war with the theory of natural rights."[13] Hook continues:

> . . . Marxism as a movement of social protest, reform, or revolution talked a language which made no sense in the light of the doctrines of historical materialism. In the Enlightenment tradition the language of natural rights is the natural language invoked to curb the excesses of power. It was this language that Marxism invoked where it voiced the demands of the suffering and oppressed for relief as well as for justice. But according to the theory of historical materialism all talk of the rights of man was simply an ideology, a rationalization of the needs of a burgeoning capitalist society. It denied the existence of any component of independent moral validity or autonomy in the appeal to human rights. If the issue was merely one of power or interest there is no more reason for one class or party in the social conflict to prevail than another, "right" should be a synonym of "might" and "wrong" of "weakness," a view which no Marxist can consistently hold when he speaks of exploitation of labor or protests against the suppression of human freedom. To say that the principle of freedom for which so many human beings willingly died during the French Revolutionary Wars was merely a slogan whose real content was the demand for freedom to buy cheap and sell dear, for freedom of contract, mobility, accumulation of capital, despite and against feudal restrictions, sounds utterly cynical. And it actually does a profound injustice to those Marxists whose ethical sensibilities are revolted by some proposed methods of achieving relief

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> from social injustice. I know of few Marxists who escape incoherence and inconsistency when they speak of natural or human rights from the standpoint of historical materialism.[14]

Hook illustrates, by way of an example, this kind of Marxist ambivalence verging on incoherence with a passage from an English Marxist, H. M. Hyndman. In 1921 Hyndman remarks, speaking of the French Revolution:

> Never in human history were great ideals prostituted to baser ends. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" is the glorious motto still inscribed on the buildings and banners of the French Republic. But what did those noble abstractions mean to the class triumphant in the French Revolution, the class whose members were its leaders throughout? Liberty to exploit by wage slavery and usury. Equality before laws enacted in the interest of profiteers, and justice administered in accordance with their profiteering notion of fair play. Fraternity as a genial brotherhood of pecuniary exploitation. The "Rights of Man" was deliberately perverted to the right to plunder under forms of equity.[15]

Hook then, though he overstates it, makes a point familiar from analytical philosophy. "It makes no sense," Hook remarks, "to assert that moral ideals have been betrayed or perverted unless we believe that they have a meaning and validity independent of the historical activities with which they have been identified."[16] If all talk of right or wrong is, just in virtue of being moral talk, without any validity since it simply rationalizes the interests of some class or other (typically the dominant class), then no legitimate non-ideological point can be made with moralizing phrases such as "being betrayed or perverted." Hook is maintaining that there is a kind of internal incoherence to the Marxist position. Below I shall seek to show how the Marxist need not be so trapped.

Marx, as has been indicated, is prone to see morality as ideology: to reduce, as Hook puts it, talk of human rights "to rhetorical masks of economic class interests."[17] These claims, as Hook points out, were not lost on many informed and sensitive people who saw the justice of the Marxist claim "that although equality of rights is a necessary condition for social justice by itself equality is not sufficient, for it was compatible with many different modes of treating human beings some of which are experienced as intolerable."[18] Paradigmatic Enlightenment theorists proclaimed that the law must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. Marx responded that where economic

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disparities are substantial, as they are in feudal and capitalist societies, the law does not and cannot protect or punish equally.[19] If a millionaire is fined a thousand dollars for the same offense as a check-out clerk the effect on them will be very different indeed. Moreover, the millionaire can afford a very different quality of legal counsel than can the check-out clerk. These and similar things make it a farce in such formal terms to speak of equality before the law. To fail to note such things is to fail to note how deeply ideological our moral and legal conceptions are. Rights-talk, and morals-talk more generally, in our capitalist societies are "outworn bourgeois notions or prejudices, irrelevant to the practices of socialist militants."[20] But a recognition of this seems at least to undermine any reasonable basis for criticizing capitalist society or any other society and urging that it be replaced, where reasonably possible, by another better society or social order. The rational justification (if that isn't pleonastic) for Marxist militancy seems to have been pulled out from under it.

Thus two elements—historical materialism and ideology—from the canonical core of Marxism may make trouble for Enlightenment humanism and with that for the claim that Marx's account provides a more persuasive articulation of that tradition than those given by its founding fathers. Marx was one of the great denouncers of all time. *Capital* and the *Grundrisse,* as well as his other mature works, plainly and unequivocally condemn capitalism and much of the ethos that goes with it. But this, some have thought, is of no avail, for such canonical concepts as historical materialism and ideology commit a consistent Marxist to an *immoralism*—some might even claim to a nihilism—that is plain incompatible with the moralizing stance Marx sometimes takes. They undermine any defense of autonomy (something Marx himself clearly prized) or of a just and humane society of emancipated persons: the very world the Enlightenment envisions.[21]

I shall maintain, against the depiction of Marx as an immoralist, that a plausible, textually responsible reading of these key concepts (the concepts of historical materialism and ideology) can be given which does not have immoralist consequences. It is not the case that, in order to believe, as Marx did, that morality is ideology, we must also (if we are consistent) be amoralists, immoralists, nihilists or some kind of moral skeptic or relativist.[22] It is not that Marx articulates some alternative theoretical way of viewing morality. He never wrote a treatise on moral philosophy or a book on the morality of revolution or on what the just society should look like. Marx would have looked on such enterprises with irony and suspicion, perhaps even with scorn.

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What I shall argue is that a good understanding of what historical materialism is and what ideology is, including most moral ideology, will show that these concepts are not incompatible with the taking of a moral point of view, with arguing that in our time capitalism is exploitative, unjust and an impediment to the fullest and most extensive human flourishing feasibly achievable. I shall also argue that these canonical conceptions are not incompatible with making claims of an arguably objective sort about a just and emancipatory social order that in general terms squares with the underlying ideals of the Enlightenment.

Historical Materialism and Morality

To start with historical materialism: being a little more rigorous about what it is will, I believe, provide the key. In his classic capsule statement of it in his preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx remarks that the economic structure of society, constituted by its set of relations of production, is the real foundation of society. This economic structure is the basis on which there "rises a legal and political superstructure . . . to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness."[23] Yet even the economic structure, as part of the whole mode of production, is what it is during a given epoch because it corresponds to a certain development of the productive forces, another element of the mode of production. In this way, as Marx puts it in his preface, "the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general."[24] What we need clearly to understand, if we would understand historical materialism, is that, looking at human history as a whole, and not just at the development of particular societies, the productive forces tend to develop throughout human history and as they develop they will periodically come to clash with the relations of production when these relations impede the growth of the productive forces. This, in turn, tends to cause conflict in society.[25] A central element of this is class conflict. Different socio-economic organizations of production, which at various times have characterized human history, rise and fall as they enable or impede the expansion of society's productive capacity. The growth of the productive forces explains the general course of human history.

Does the acceptance of this, as Hook and many others believe, justifiably undermine a belief in morals? If historical materialism is true,

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can there be no transhistorical set of moral principles to which all people should conform, regardless of class or situation?

Engels may very well be right in denying that if historical materialism is true there are any eternal moral principles with any determinate content.[26] But there still could in the various epochs with their determinate modes of production be contextually justified moral principles that have a perfectly reasonable objectivity. Historical materialists can perfectly well say that at such and such a time with such and such a mode of production, such and such moral principles are justified and that at still another time with yet another mode of production a different set of moral principles is justified. Judgments about what is or is not correct at each of these times, as far as historical materialism is concerned, can be perfectly objective; they can be made across modes of production and can, in principle at least, be seen to be justified by any reflective person with normal sympathies and with a good knowledge of the relevant facts.[27]

The de facto dependency of the extant moralities on modes of production does not rule out a belief in moral progress. Engels was perfectly explicit about this.[28] As the production forces develop, they open up more and more possibilities for well-being, for human flourishing, and, specifically, for more autonomy for more people. Feudal society opened up more such possibilities than ancient slave-owning society did; capitalist society opened up more such possibilities than feudal society; and socialist societies will, if Marx's account of historical materialism is near the mark, open up still more such possibilities for more people than do capitalist societies. The lives of more people become better—objectively better—as we go through these epochal transformations. This is plainly not the road to immoralism, nihilism or even relativism. There is nothing skeptical or subjective about such a position.

Ideology and Morality

I turn now to ideology. Marx famously, and some think notoriously, said that morality is ideology: that moral beliefs express in a disguised way class interests, usually those of the dominant class, though they are standardly taken by people in the society as objective claims which answer to the interests or needs of everyone alike.

On the face of it Marx to be at all consistent must be an immoralist,

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amoralist or nihilist rejecting all moral ideals as so much rhetorical rubbish. It is my belief that appearances are deceiving here and that there is a reading of "ideology" fully justifiable and in accord with Marx's text which will show that none of these anti-moralist consequences follow from Marx's claim that morality is ideology.[29]

This, I admit, sounds paradoxical. To relieve this paradox I will need first to characterize what I think is, particularly with philosophers, a wide-spread misunderstanding about Marxist conceptions of ideology and then give a general characterization of ideology and a gloss on that characterization that will properly spell out what is involved in the claim that morality is ideology.

Many intellectuals, and most particularly philosophers, are prone to misunderstand the claim that morality is ideology, in effect, if not explicitly, taking it as an *epistemological* claim or a claim about the *logical* status of moral notions—all moral notions, ill thought-out notions as well as carefully deliberated ones. It is a claim, they think, that when we get clear about what moral ideas really are, when we get clear about the very meanings of these concepts, we will come to see that the very idea of their being moral knowledge or valid moral belief is nonsense; for moral ideas are, and can be, nothing but class-based social demands which—simply because of what moral ideas must be—are without any rational warrant. But in fact, Marx's remark about morality being ideology is an observation in the *sociology of morals* and not in *moral epistemology* or *moral philosophy*. By "sociology of morals" I mean theories about the origin and function or functions of morality in society. Does, for example, morality emerge through social stimulation and does it help create or strengthen bonds of solidarity between people? By a "moral epistemology" I mean a theory about whether or not morality can yield knowledge, and if so how is it that moral propositions are known, or reasonably believed, to be true or false. Moral philosophy includes moral epistemology, but it is as well an inquiry into what, if anything, is the supreme principle of morality or whether there are several fundamental principles with no one taking precedence. It also asks whether, as a justificatory base, an ethics should be rights-based, duty-based, goal-based or some mixture thereof, and whether there is a distinct manner of reasoning in ethics which would show us that, and how, we could justify moral beliefs and actions. This, and much more, goes into a philosophical theory of ethics and a moral epistemology but I have given enough of an account to show how very different it is from a sociology of morals.

What I am claiming is that Marx tendered a distinctive sociology of

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morals which, he claimed, shows how moral ideas arise in class societies and tend to function to further or at least protect the interests of the dominant class. Their typical social role is to reconcile us to our condition, typically a dominated condition, in class societies. This, Marx claims, is their ideological function; but there is no philosophical claim being made here about what moral claims are and must be. There is no claim that something in the very nature of a moral idea makes it function in this way: no claim that moral conceptions *must be* essentially illusory.

It is all too easy to confuse this sociological conception of the role typically played by moralities in class societies with an iconoclastic bit of moral epistemology which claims that "believing in morals" must be an illusion because there can be no objective prescriptivity built into the fabric of the world, since moral ideas are simply objectivized emotions.[30] This Hume-like conception of morality may tell it like it is, but there is nothing in Marx or the Marxist tradition requiring the acceptance of such a theory.

Ideological beliefs are part of the superstructure for Marx but *not* everything that is in the superstructure is ideological.[31] Marx thought there could be genuinely social scientific ideas, including his own ideas about a science of society, which were superstructural without being ideological. An *ideology* is a cluster of superstructural beliefs (or practices associated with such beliefs) which are (a) typically mystifying or illusory; which (b) typically involve our public conceptions of ourselves; which (c) reflect, though typically in a disguised way, the interests of a determinate class or other primary social group (such as the Afrikaners); and which (d) are presented as impartially answering to the interests of everyone alike in the society. Ideologies typically mold the way we see things. They are distortion-prone and function, very typically, to keep people (particularly the dominated classes) in place. However, they do not *necessarily* distort, though they do necessarily answer to class interests or to something very like class interests. *That something answers to class interests is the mark of the ideological.*

With such a conception of ideology, in which mystification is a *contingent* feature, there is no necessary conflict between either science and ideology or morality and ideology. Marx, in writing *Capital,* sought to make a contribution to our scientific understanding of how whole socio-economic systems work *and* he at the same time made a contribution to socialist ideology by supporting working class interests in showing (trying to show) how the capitalist system can be broken. Since an ideology in answering to class interests *need* not do so by dis-

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tortion, *Capital* could at one and the same time, without any inconsistency at all, be both scientific and ideological. The same thing could be said for Smith or Ricardo, though their scientific accounts supported different class interests.

Similar things can be said about morality and ideology. Marxists argue that capitalism exploits and dominates workers. If that is true and if, as Marxists also think, the productive forces are sufficiently advanced so that socialism is a reasonable possibility, then it can sensibly be argued—and with a certain moral force—that achieving socialism would be a good thing and that we ought to struggle to make socialism a reality. Those two judgments, judgments which Marxists would make, are plainly moral judgments. They are, that is, genuinely moral remarks—and indeed they could be morally justified. But they could also be ideological at the same time. That is, they could serve the interests of the working class. But this does not necessarily turn such moral claims into mere bits of ideology which distort our understanding of the situation in our struggle against the capitalist class and in favor of the working class. Again there *need* be no conflict between the moral and the ideological: something could be genuinely moral and could, as well, be morally justified while remaining ideological. Just as there is no necessary conflict between science and ideology, there is no necessary conflict between morality and ideology. The core principles of Marxism, therefore, do not conflict with Enlightenment ideals. Indeed Marx should be seen as crucially developing the Enlightenment project rather than as unwittingly undermining it. This makes him not an enemy of, but a central figure in Enlightenment humanism.[32]

NOTES

1. Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring,* trans. Emile Burns (New York: International Publishers, 1939), chs. IX–XI. See also Kai Nielsen, "Engels on Morality and Moral Theorizing," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 26 (1983).
2. William Shaw, "Marxism and Moral Objectivity" in Kai Nielsen and Steven Patten, eds., *Marx and Morality* (Guelph, Ont.: Canadian Association for Publishing in Philosophy, 1981); Kai Nielsen, "If Historical Materialism is True, Does Morality Totter?" *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (January 1986); and Kai Nielsen, "Historical Materialism, Ideology and Ethics," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 29 (1985): 47–63.
3. Friedrich Engels, "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx" in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader,* 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 681–82.

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4. G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); Richard W. Miller, *Analyzing Marx* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); John E. Roemer, *A General Theory of Exploitation and Class* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986); John E. Roemer, ed., *Analytical Marxism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Robert Paul Wolff, *Understanding Marx* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Daniel Little, *The Scientific Marx* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Andrew Levine, *Arguing for Socialism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).
5. Elster, 531.
6. Sidney Hook, "The Enlightenment and Marxism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 29, no. 1 (January–March 1986): 93–108. Allen Wood and Richard Miller, while defending with considerable resourcefulness the Marxist anti-moralist line, do not assent to the claim that being a Marxist anti-moralist runs counter to Enlightenment humanitarian values. See Allen Wood, "Marx's Immoralism" in Bernard Chavance, ed., *Marx en Perspective* (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales, 1985), 681–98 and Richard Miller, *Analyzing Marx,* part I. See also Andrew Collier, "Aristotelian Marx," *Inquiry* 29, no. 4 (December 1986): 459–70 and Collier, "Scientific Socialism and the Question of Socialist Values" in Kai Nielsen and Steven Patten, eds., *Marx and Morality* (Guelph, Ont.: Canadian Association for Publishing in Philosophy, 1981), 121–54. For a careful textual account of Marx's views on human rights see George G. Brenkert, "Marx and Human Rights," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (January 1986): 55–77.
7. Hook, 93–109.
8. *Ibid.*, 95–96.
9. *Ibid.*, 96.
10. *Ibid.*, 97.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, 98.
13. *Ibid,* 99. G. A. Cohen, in a way that is very unusual for a Marxist, argues that Marxists should believe in natural rights, that that belief does not conflict with the canonical core of Marxism and that it is confusion on the part of many Marxists about the nature of morality that makes them think otherwise and make theoretical claims that belie their own practice. See G. A. Cohen, "Freedom, Justice and Capitalism," *New Left Review* no. 126 (March–April 1981): 3–17 and Cohen, "Peter Mew on Justice and Capitalism," *Inquiry* 29, no. 3 (September 1986): 315–23. For some standard difficulties in traditional conceptions of human rights see my "Human Rights," *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (April–June 1986): 151–56.
14. Hook, 99.

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15. *Ibid.* See E. M. Hyndman, *The Evolution of Revolution* (London, 1921), 236. Cited by Hook.
16. Hook, 99. I say "overstated" because of the following considerations. Hook is right for starters (and importantly so) in asserting that if moral talk (all moral talk) is just rhetorical rubbish serving class interests then there is no possible conceptual space left even to claim that moral ideals have been betrayed or perverted. Only if they are capable of being validly asserted would it make sense to say that they could be betrayed or perverted. To get such talk off the ground we must have some non-vacuous contrast. But the validity claim might be understood in a far more historicist way than Hook allows, one that would not be so independent of the historical activities with which they have been identified. (Remember, historicism is one thing and relativism another.) Hook simply begs the question posed by those who would give a more contextual or historicist reading of such validity claims.
17. *Ibid.*, 100.
18. *Ibid.*, 101.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, 102.
21. *Ibid.*, 107–8. Hook's references to Marx are from *MEGA*, 1/1, 561, *MEGA*, 1/1, 615 and *MEGA*, 1/8, 278.
22. I have developed these views in my "Marx and Moral Ideology," *African Philosophical Inquiry* 1, no. 1 (January 1987): 71–87; "A Marxist Conception of Ideology" in Anthony Parel, ed., *Philosophy and Politics* (Waterloo, Ont.: University of Waterloo Press, 1983), 139–61; "Are Moral Beliefs Ideological Deceptions?" in Bhakhu Parekh and Thomas Pantham, eds., *Political Discourse* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1987), 82–96; "Marxism and the Moral Point of View," *American Philosophical Quarterly* (1987); and "Justice, Class Interests and Marxism," *Dialogos* (1987).
23. Karl Marx, "Preface to the Critique of Political Economy" in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton Inc., 1987), 3–6. G. A. Cohen, "Forces and Relations of Production" in Betty Matthews, ed., *Marx 100 Years On* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983), 111–34; G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense;* and G. A. Cohen, "Reply to Four Critics," *Analyse & Kritik* 5, no. 3 (December 1983): 195–222.
24. Marx, "Preface to the Critique of Political Economy," 4.
25. Kai Nielsen, "Taking Historical Materialism Seriously," *Dialogue* 22 (1983): 319–338.
26. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 94–105. Nielsen, "Engels on Morality and Moral Theorizing."
27. Nielsen, "If Historical Materialism is True, Does Morality Totter?" and "Marxism and the Moral Point of View."
28. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 105.
29. Joe McCarney, *The Real World of Ideology* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980);

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Nielsen, "A Marxist Conception of Ideology"; "Are Moral Beliefs Ideological Deceptions?"; "Marx and Moral Ideology"; and "Marxism, Morality and Moral Philosophy"; Joseph P. DeMarco and Richard M. Fox, eds., *New Directions in Ethics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 92–112.

30. J. L. Mackie, *Contemporary Linguistic Philosophy—Its Strength and Its Weakness* (Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1956); his *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1977), and his *Hume's Moral Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980). For a discussion of Mackie's views and, more generally, of projectivism and of the rejection of objective prescriptivity, see the essays in Ted Honderich, ed., *Morality and Objectivity* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).
31. John McMurtry, *The Structure of Marx's World-View* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 123–56. Note his citations of Marx there.
32. Harry Garfinkel reminded me on an occasion of reading this paper that paradigmatic Enlightenment figures were individualists in a way that Marx and Marxists were not and this individualism was a central element in classical Enlightenment thought. I agree that it was and that it is in conflict with Marx and Marxism. However, the core elements of my minimalist conceptualization of the Enlightenment are also fundamental features of the classical Enlightenment and are detachable from its individualism. I concentrate on these features and show how they square with a Marxist view of things. It should also be noted that arguments for rights were central to Enlightenment thought. It could be the case, though I am not claiming it, that Marx like Bentham rejected rights—and particularly natural rights—while still accepting other moral notions as legitimate. *If* this were the case he would in another way be moving away from paradigmatic Enlightenment views. But there are, if my arguments in the text are near to the mark, more than enough similarities to make Marx an heir to the Enlightenment.

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Chris Sciabarra

MARX ON THE PRECIPICE OF UTOPIA

MARX, REASON, AND THE ART OF FREEDOM

by Kevin M. Brien

Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987. 288pp., $32.95

Kevin Brien presents a provocative, integrated, systematic, and illuminating discussion of the relationship between reason and freedom in the works of Karl Marx. Brien's philosophical and methodological study uncovers important and often neglected epistemological parallels between Marxist and non-Marxist philosophers, while it distinguishes Marx's dialectical method as an indispensable tool for radical analysis. However, in his valiant, and successful, efforts to provide an original contribution to Marxist scholarship, Brien has inadvertently raised far more questions about the actualizable potential of Marx's project than he has answered. These questions are decisive precisely because they challenge Marxist theory on an epistemological level.

Brien's book views Marx's thought as a philosophical whole, one which transcends the apparent tensions between Marx's early and later writings, between Marx and Engels, and between the "critical" and "scientific" Marxist traditions. "Critical" Marxism, such as that of Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse, is far more Hegelian, "voluntaristic" and anti-positivist in its intellectual orientation, while the "scientific" Marxist tradition, recently embodied in Althusser's structuralism, is decidedly "determinist" and positivistic. Althusser, in fact, suggested that this split between "critical" and "scientific" tradi-

The author's doctoral dissertation, "Toward a Radical Critique of Utopianism: Dialectics and Dualism in the Works of Friedrich Hayek, Murray Rothbard and Karl Marx," was successfully defended in 1988 in the Department of Politics, New York University.

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tions is an outgrowth of an "epistemological break" in Marx's own writings that separates Marx from his young Hegelianism, and propels him toward the "mature," historical materialism of his post-1844 writings.

This Althusserian position has been disputed by Bertell Ollman and Scott Meikle, among others, now joined by Kevin Brien.[1] Brien argues persuasively that Marx's thought is a developing, open-ended and incomplete system, and that the apparent tensions in his writings are not illustrative of any profound philosophical or epistemological conflicts within the totality of Marx's thought. Still, Brien's Marx embraces a specific and consistent set of principles in his interpretation, understanding, experience and explanation of reality (181).

Marx's Metaphysics

Brien writes that Marx's metaphysics treats consciousness as internally related to objective reality. Man is a "being-in-the-world." His free, conscious life-activity is both objectifying and transformative. It is objectifying because it concretizes human purposes in the real world. It is transformative because it does not merely react upon objective reality; it changes and alters the natural and social context from which it springs. Based upon this presupposition, Brien suggests that Marx's opposition to "vulgar" philosophical idealism is not inspired by an equally vulgar, mechanistic materialism. Marx does not view ideas as disembodied abstractions. He sees ideas as internally related to the social and material context within which they are expressed, and without which they would lose existential significance.

Brien writes that this dialectical view of the internal relationship between ideas and material context is inherently opposed to determinism. Though Brien admits that Marx's language is sometimes ambiguous (56–57), he argues that economic determinism is, nonetheless, a fundamental distortion of the essential Marxian perspective. Engels, in 1890, acknowledged his own responsibility for the distortive "vulgarization" of historical materialism. He wrote that

> Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize the main principle *vis-à-vis* our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to give their due to the other factors involved in the interaction.[2]

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The key word here is "interaction." The dialectic incorporates a thoroughly organic understanding of internal relationships. When Marx and Engels emphasize economic factors, they do not lose sight of the fact that just as economic factors influence non-economic factors, so too are there reciprocal effects.

Brien's interpretation of the Marxian dialectic incorporates this organic conception of internal relations in a way which is both original and provocative. Brien's presentation of dialectical method appropriates the philosophical insights of both contemporary Marxists and non-Marxists. Naturally, Brien cites the significant contributions of Marxist thinkers, such as Ollman. Surprisingly, Brien also cites the crucially important work of Brand Blanshard in this area of philosophy. Blanshard argues in *The Nature of Thought* that every object of thought is what it is by virtue of its relations to other objects. These relations are constitutive of the object itself and, in differing degrees, they determine the object's fundamental characteristics down to the last detail. According to Brien, certain key elements of Blanshard's view of the theory of internal relations can be utilized to elucidate the Marxian perspective. But Brien argues that Blanshard's philosophical idealism cannot offer precise definitional criteria. Blanshard assumes that an object is defined by *all* of its internal relationships. To this extent, the definition relies upon a complete grasp of these relations. Brien criticizes this proposition when he suggests that human knowledge is an open-ended process, and that human beings cannot gain an exhaustive comprehension of the whole. Thus, Brien rejects what Geoffrey Hellman calls the "doctrine of strict organicity."[3] Strict organicity assumes that the interdependence of social reality makes it impossible to examine any part of existence without taking into account *every* part of existence.[4]

The Epistemic Utopia

This opposition to strict organicity is not restricted to Marxist philosophy. F. A. Hayek and Michael Polanyi, for instance, have suggested that a synoptic grasp of the whole is epistemologically impossible. Indeed, the idealist belief in the possibility of an exhaustive comprehension of the whole and its internal relations is the hallmark of utopian thinking.

Utopians attempt to reconstruct and transform social reality as if they were outside the context of history and culture. They embrace constructivist designs for progressive change which ultimately rely

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upon a synoptic grasp of the social whole. Constructivism is based on the belief that human beings can achieve a complete understanding of all the subtle and sophisticated complexities of social life. It does not recognize the dialectical interplay of human intentions and unintended consequences, since by implication it assumes that intentional human action can achieve any desired effects. This is not merely an exaggeration of the efficacious potential of the human mind. It is a prescription for social change based on human omniscience. Not only does the utopian require full knowledge of what is knowable, he or she needs full knowledge of that which has not even been articulated. Hayek correctly views utopian blueprints for social change as resting on what he describes as a "synoptic delusion."[5] A "synoptic delusion" represents a false belief that one can consciously design a new society as if one had possession of holistic knowledge. Holistic knowledge involves grasping the complex inter-relations of the society which are necessarily constituted by both tacit and articulated social practices. Drawing upon the insights of Michael Polanyi, Hayek explains that to achieve such knowledge, man would have to know the structure and processes of his own mind. Hayek argues that, on the contrary,

> there will always be some rules governing a mind which that mind in its then prevailing state cannot communicate, and . . . if it ever were to acquire the capacity of communicating these rules, this would presuppose that it had acquired further higher rules which make the communication of the former possible but which themselves will still be incommunicable.[6]

Thus, Hayek believes that the idea of a mind explaining itself is a logical contradiction, and that its impossibility gives us a lesson in cognitive humility, curbing our intellectual hubris.[7] Man's fallibility and the inherent, contextual limits of his knowledge, are, then, the strongest factors militating against a fully imposed or designed utopian order—which would, Hayek suggests, dislocate the very processes which make order possible.

Hayek expresses a distrust of utopianism on an epistemological level that both Marx and Engels would have appreciated. Marx and Engels opposed utopian theorizing because it depended upon abstract system-building. According to Marx, the ability of human beings to transcend the unintended consequences of their actions and to consciously create non-exploitative social conditions could only arise out of specific historical circumstances. Marx writes that for utopian thinkers,

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> historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action, historically created conditions of emancipation to fantastic ones, and the gradually spontaneous class-organisation of the proletariat to an organisation of society *specifically* contrived by these inventors. Future history resolves itself, in their eyes, into the propaganda and practical carrying out of their social plans.[8]

Marx's stated opposition to utopian theorizing, however, does not mean that Marx's project itself is able to transcend the epistemological pitfalls of utopianism. Brien writes that for Marx, capitalism engenders concrete social relations which "are independent of human will in the sense that people are born into a network of already existing, historically developed social relations which they did not choose, but which shape the development of individual consciousness from birth" (47). While these social relations are themselves constituted by free, conscious human agency, it is clear that true "freedom" will not emerge until men and women have conquered the "alienated" social conditions of capitalism.

Brien emphasizes that Marx views reason as "historical and grounded in the primacy of man's material practice" (176). Free, conscious, creative, human activity is the historical achievement of socialism. But socialism "presupposes a structural transformation of the cognitive and conative faculties as they obtain in capitalism" (174). In Marx's vision of communism, the form of human freedom heralded by the capitalist system, in its "bourgeois" celebration of free, conscious, human volition, is concretized by a content, or social context, which makes free choice both rational and emancipatory. Man's capacity to reason is actualized by social conditions which are rational. Man's nature as a free, conscious being is actualized by social conditions which are free.

And yet, by tracing the internal relationship between "reason and the art of freedom," Brien's interpretation of Marx's project suggests inadvertently that communism is fundamentally dependent upon a grandiose epistemological achievement. Marx posits an historically emergent cognitive efficacy which boggles the human mind. On one level, Marx's speculations about man's future imply that he has a synoptic grasp of the movement of history. It is not entirely clear how Marx has access to knowledge about the inevitable triumph of human efficacy which is central to the achievement of communism. Marx's optimism is amplified by his historicism. Marx does not accept the Hayekian-Polanyian thesis which places fundamental strictures on

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man's cognitive capacity. For Marx, these strictures are themselves historically specific to pre-communist social formations.

The Marxist philosopher Marx Wartofsky, who, in fact, has written the introduction to Brien's book, writes on another occasion that "it remains an empirical question whether there are transhistorical invariants in the history of cognition."[9] The Hayekian-Polanyian arguments against constructivist-utopian planning illustrate that this "empirical" issue is decisive. While Brien's book emphasizes the important links between reason and freedom, it does not adequately question the actualizable potential of Marx's epistemological transcendence. If, indeed, the strictures on human knowledge are *ontological,* rather than historical, then Marx's project may be leading many genuine radicals toward an inherently unreachable, utopian goal.

NOTES

1. See Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), and Scott Meikle, *Essentialism in the Thought of Karl Marx* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1985).
2. Friedrich Engels, "Letter to Joseph Bloch" (21–22 September, 1890) in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Correspondence, 1844–1895,* 3rd rev. ed., trans. I. Lasker, ed. S. W. Ryazanskaya (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982), 396.
3. Geoffrey Hellman, "Historical Materialism" in John Mepham and David-Hillel Ruben, eds., *Issues in Marxist Philosophy: Materialism* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1979), 161.
4. Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx* (New York: Regnal and Hitchcock, 1936), 62.
5. F. A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty,* vol. 1, *Rules and Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 14.
6. F. A. Hayek, "Rules, Perception and Intelligibility," *Studies in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 62.
7. F. A. Hayek, "The Theory of Complex Phenomena," *Studies in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics,* 39. See also Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science* (Illinois: The Free Press, 1952).
8. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto" (1848) in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works, In One Volume* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 60.
9. Marx Wartofsky, "From Genetic Epistemology to Historical Epistemology: Kant, Marx, and Piaget" in *Piaget and the Foundations of Knowledge,* ed. Lynn S. Liben (Hillsdale: N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1983), 16.

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David Felix

MEANINGFUL MARX AND MARXOLOGY

THE MEANING OF KARL MARX

by Bruce Mazlish

New York: Oxford University Press, 1984. 188 pp., $17.95

This illumination of the essential Marx should appear on all the reading lists of the courses on the great man and his doctrine—and will not in most instances. Cutting across the mainstream of Marxology, Mazlish manages, in 153 pages of text, to address most of the significant meanings in Marx's life and works. One must grant that the brevity operates by way of suggestiveness and less than total documentation, but then the writer, unlike the Marxologists, is not obliged to explain away most of the real world. In his introduction Mazlish first rescues his man from his friends, the "theological Marxists," who "debate endlessly about the fine points of Marxist thought, as a closed system, never looking beyond the master to the reality which he purports to describe and analyze." On the contrary, "Marx must be viewed steadily in the context of his time" (5). Mazlish stands the epigones on their heads or, if you will, spins them on their heels: "The way must be forward, past Marx, not backwards, to a pure Marx" (6).

Marxism as Religion

Mazlish sees Marx as the greatest theologian of them all: "Marx was very much a religious thinker" trying to function as a social scientist:

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"But his effort was twisted by his millennial leanings." The result was a "secular religion—a term which I prefer to ideology," Mazlish adds (5, 6, 4). This as an important ingredient in Marx's power over both intellectuals and, through their mediation, less cerebral persons: "His secular 'theology,' the endless arguments . . . made and make him appealing to intellectuals . . . an appeal similar to that of James Joyce for other scholars. . . ." Thus the intellectuals "can have their religion and pretend it is science. As for the masses . . . they can embrace a 'religion' of atheism, with all the rituals, ceremonies, symbolic representations, and mythic claims immanent in traditional religion" (17).

The massive foundation for all this was provided by the religious character of Marx's being and vision. His father's father and brother were successively chief rabbi in the former bishopric of Trier in the Rhineland, the Marx birthplace. Indeed, the family had provided Trier with rabbis since the seventeenth century.[1] His mother, too, descended from a line of rabbis. Marx's personal leadership was very much in the style of a Hasidic rabbi, adjusting private lives as much as interpreting dogma. This can be seen in his letters comforting faltering followers, intriguing with some, intriguing against others, sending money to a friend in trouble, "borrowing" from many another, and always demanding maximum efforts for the cause.[2] For strategic reasons Marx was impelled to break up formally structured organizations, the Communist League and the First International among them, but there was always a "Marx Party" of a handful of close followers, at one point (in 1853) down to a total of nine[3] who kept the faith. As Mazlish expresses it, the fact that that faith called itself atheism made it no less, and no less profoundly, religious.

It was precisely Marx's character as a *leader,* rabbinical in style though it was, that made him so aggressively atheistic. In his incessant drive to dominate, he tried to eliminate any interferences. There should be no competitive thoughts in his followers' minds—no competitive feelings in their hearts, and he pressed them to empty themselves of everything alien. Wilhelm Liebknecht, one of the faithful nine of the "Marx Party," later remembered being received in the Marx household only after Marx and Engels had closely tested him: "I was suspected of petit bourgeois 'democratic ideology' . . . [and] South-German sentimentality by my two examiners." He passed the test after accepting "very sharp criticism. . . . Marx tried to assure and reassure himself about his people."[4]

Early and late Marx's vision extended to other-worldly things encompassing what he chose to see in this world. One stage occurred dur-

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ing his honeymoon summer, the moment between his self-destructing editorship of a liberal Cologne newspaper and his entering the life of a revolutionary in Paris. In the notes he took of a reading of Hegel[5] he leaped beyond his master in philosophy to describe "the characteristic aspect" of the contemporary civil society as *"propertylessness"* (Marx's emphasis, as in other italicized quotations here). He associated with it a *"class dependent* on working." Together, the quality and the class "do not so much form a class of civil society as they serve as the basis on which society's elements rest and move."[6] He had discovered his proletariat before he had ever seen a factory worker or known that such a being existed. A few weeks later, in an article written on the basis of his notes,[7] Marx fleshed out and named his "universal class." It would be the class that meant the end of all classes, the class "which could hurl at its enemy the defiant battle cry, *'I am nothing and I am to be everything.'*" Marx concluded triumphantly, "When the proletariat announces the *dissolution of the existing world order,* it simply announces the *secret of its own existence. . . .*"[8] Surely the proletariat is the least-who-will-be-first of the Judeo-Christian imagination.

This early image leads to Marx's succeeding stations and, finally, to an ultimate all-confirming goal. Always there is a Christian (shading into Manichean) dialectic of good and evil: the exploiting capitalist of *Capital* forcing twelve hours of work out of the proletarian for the pay of six hours, the fragile democracy of some Western nations *vis-à-vis* the pure Russian despotism, the martyred workers of the June (1848) Insurrection in Paris crushed by the murderous bourgeoisie, and the similarly martyred *Communards* going down before the repetitively murderous bourgeoisie in 1871. But then, toward the end of volume 3 of *Capital,* Marx arrives at his epiphany, however labored. Peering beyond the ultimate of capitalist production he sees freedom from this imprisonment in the injustice of the merely mundane. First, brute material compulsion had to be conquered: "In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labor which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production." Victory goes to socialized production: "Freedom . . . can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature . . . instead of being ruled by it. . . ." Now Marx can arrive at his materialistic epiphany: "Beyond begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom—" This is awfully close to . . . heaven, but Marx did not trust his weight

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on it completely. He completes the sentence, "—which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis."[9] But if it is heaven qualified, it remains heaven.

"In emphasizing Marx's religious appeal, I do not mean to underestimate the cognitive attraction of his work," Mazlish balances delicately. "He did address real social problems—the dislocations of the Industrial Revolution as well as what he saw as the innate flaws of capitalism." Mazlish concludes, "Thus his appeal was, and is, cognitive as well as religious, intellectual as well as emotional, and on the terrain of 'what is' as well as 'what should be'" (18).

Young Marx and Old

Developing both sides of this equation, Mazlish examines key episodes in Marx's coming of age: adolescent idealist, romantic student and poet, authority-hating editor, anti-Semite, professional revolutionary and revolutionary philosopher, in sum, leader and theologian of the ultimate revolution. Persuasively, Mazlish specifies that by the time of the *Communist Manifesto* and the Revolution of 1848, "the fundamentals of Marx's intellectual and revolutionary creativity are in place—the 'young' and 'old' Marx have met. . . ." With that, Mazlish neatly dismisses the attempt to split Marx into separate humanist and scientist *personae*. "After the mid-century we encounter mainly elaborations" (105).

Mazlish grants that "from 1844 to 1848 Marx had worked forward to his materialist interpretation," one of the summits of his mature thought. But the young Marx remained in force as well: "I do not believe he had abjured or relinquished his millennial, utopian dream—it is the psychic drive behind what came to be Marxism. . . ." (96–97). Mazlish can also cite *Capital* to show the powerful "humanist" element of Marx's youth in that grandly scientific or "cognitive" work. If, in so condensed a study, he feels no need to adduce more arguments, one can easily find them in Marx's life and writings.

The mature Marx appears in the 17-year-old. In his Latin composition, an essay required for secondary-school graduation, young Karl speculated on the reign of Augustus as "distinguished by its clemency." Yet "all freedom and even the appearance of freedom had disappeared." Karl provided his resolution: "If a people has become enervated . . . an emperor rather than a free republic can give it liberty."[10]

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He was already a practitioner of *Realpolitik* in the style of Lenin and, before having read Hegel, possessor of a talent for dialectical thinking.

Marx's *Grundrisse,* workbooks written in 1857–58 as preparation for his *Critique of Political Economy* (1859), contained lyrical celebrations of both antiquity and modern political economy. The *Critique* itself, Marx's first explicitly economic study, was still-born, a lifeless thing composed of inadequate data and underdeveloped ideas. It was distinguished only by the powerful, classic statement of materialism contained in its preface: "In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. . . ."[11] Yet arriving at this achievement, Marx paused in the introduction to the *Grundrisse* to yield to unproductive wonderment: "In the case of the arts, it is well known that certain periods of their flowering are out of all proportion to the general development of society, hence also to the material foundation . . ."—thus the Greeks or Shakespeare as compared to modern spirits. And Marx permitted himself this reactionary thought: "Why should not the historic childhood of humanity, its most beautiful unfolding, as a stage never to return, exercise an eternal charm?" He concluded, "The Greeks were normal children. The charm of their art for us is not in contradiction to the undeveloped state of society on which it grew. [It] is its result, rather, and is inextricably bound up, rather, with the fact that the unripe social conditions under which it arose, and could alone arise, can never return."[12] Looking back, for the moment, Marx mourned.

The *Paris Manuscripts* of 1844, better described by the alternate title of *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts,* have been excessively celebrated as the expression of the humanistic Marx. While they do contain their romantic effusions and concern about alienation, they also express a range of Marx's early, but well schooled, thoughts on economics. It was in Paris in 1844, moreover, that Marx came upon his first viewing of his mature conception of materialism. More than a decade later, in the *Grundrisse,* as he would again do in *Capital,* he also addressed alienation. In notebook III of the *Grundrisse,* part of a speculation on the essence on capital, Marx refused to see the political economy as the abstract process described by the bourgeois economists but as a living

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thing. He attempted to capture its quality in a series of half-poetic, half-epistemological fugues. He celebrated labor as bringing capital to life: "Labor now acts as a fructifying vitality upon [capital's] merely existent and hence dead objectivity." Capital was only money or objectivized labor, but "labor is the yeast thrown into it, which starts it fermenting."[13] Alienated labor had achieved its miracle. And so the mature scholar-revolutionary Marx fermented.

It was *Capital* itself, Mazlish rightly insists, that became Marx's ultimate masterpiece precisely because it so magnificently combined art and science as it combined his still youthful fire and his ripe understanding. "It is a passionate drama, an epic poem, in which we descend into capitalism's innermost circles, go through its purgatory fires, in order to emerge at the end with a glimpse of its downfall and promise of future salvation," Mazlish writes. "It is Marx's imagery, not his economic 'science' which grips us; it is his judgmental wrath, not his objective analysis that fastens on *both* our hearts and minds." He compares Marx's language to Dante's and asks his readers to listen: "'Let us, therefore, leave this noisy region of the market, where all that goes on is done in full view of every one's eyes. . . . We will follow the owner of money and the owner of labor power into the hidden foci of production. . . . Here we shall discover, not only how capital produces, but also how it is itself produced. We shall at last discover the secret of the making of surplus value.'"

Mazlish concludes, "There is no question that it is a great work. . . . *Capital* . . . offers us a magnificent historical drama. . . . It employs a masterly exposition of classical economic theory, with original additions. . . . It animates the whole with passionate indignation and prophetic zeal. . . ." It was the "Bible . . . in Marx's eschatological mission to spark a revolution" (113, 109, 117).

Examining the mechanism of *Capital* as powered by the conception of surplus value, however, Mazlish tests it as pure economic science and grades it a failure. He argues that "surplus value," properly analyzed, represents not robbery, hence exploitation, of the workers but the necessary source of reinvestment, as Marx had to concede. Mazlish notes that his labor theory of value, which generates the theory of surplus value, attributes the creation of *all* value to human labor, and he asks: if so, "why would the manufacturer . . . ever want to replace labor—the profit-creating component—with machinery?" (112) It is precisely such "simple" questions that the academic left fails to ask. On this test the mechanism of their exegeses would collapse as does

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the scientific *Capital*. I recall debating with a philosophical Marxist, who, driven into a corner by mediocre fact, granted even as he clung to his position: "I guess I'm a millenarian."

Appealing as it is, Mazlish's brevity cannot, however, do all the work he demands of it. Suggestiveness is not enough to encompass Marx's total achievement. Too many of Mazlish's conclusions rephrase his introductory theses with too little development between, while his swift passage scamps magnitudes and enormities. He devotes only a paragraph and a half (63) to Marx's immensely meaningful actions in the Revolution of 1848, a committed revolutionary's only chance to function in his element and prime reality. Previously, Mazlish had overleaped Marx's first real contact with revolutionaries in Paris in 1843–45. Similarly, Mazlish touches upon Marx's anti-Semitism (74–76), but accepts his subject's excuses too readily and leaves out the worst episode, a pathetically scatalogical attack on a Jewish editor; gets Marx into the Communist League (101) without mention of his pre-existing Communist Correspondence Committee; and has Marx scorning peasants (19), a significant point, without explaining *why*. A distinguished intellectual historian with many interests, Mazlish seems to have been unwilling to bury himself under limitlessly expanding mountains of Marxologist exegeses and selected trivia. Yet the reader, spared all this while missing a few useful facts, can, on balance, be grateful.

Competition

While implicitly challenging Marxology in the very character of his book, Mazlish works out compromises with two of its exemplars. Both address central Marxian issues, the dictatorial-totalitarian element in Marx and the conflict between his determinism, corollary to his materialism, and his conception of freedom.

About the first question, Mazlish allows himself to be persuaded by Richard N. Hunt's *The Political Ideas of Marx and Engels* that at least the evidence against Marx is "inconclusive."[14] Hunt first conceives of two classes of activists, "tough-minded elitists" like Gracchus Babeuf and Auguste Blanqui, thus totalitarian in essence, and "tender-minded democrats" like the milder Louis Blanc and Moses Hess. Marx and Engels, however, did not fit into either group, Hunt determined, and he promptly tailored another class, "tough-minded democrats," to fit them.[15] The category was the argument. More broadly and vaguely,

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Hunt's whole narrative sought to deny the absoluteness of a Marx liquidating a heretic like Wilhelm Weitling (who did have crazy ideas) or otherwise crushing disagreement. Such efforts must struggle against the grain of a man who could not conceive he was wrong, arranged his life to eliminate or annihilate all resistance, and instructed family and friends to believe all that he believed on pain of following Weitling into banishment and oblivion. It was precisely this *un*democratic tough-mindedness that made Marx the posthumous conqueror with whom we struggle today.

Walter L. Adamson, the other Marxologist, labored with Marx's perfect puzzle, his willed vision of the coexistence of determinism and freedom. Like the spoiled elder son that he always remained, Marx demanded both, thus getting the total support of history as it moved to its necessary ends, while at the same time himself possessing the absolute freedom to achieve his ends, no matter where history wanted to go. Adamson came to Marx's aid by interpreting him to have created four categories of history: anthropological, pragmatological, nomological, and historiographic (Mazlish, 143–45).[16] Shifting these categories about, Adamson, taking Mazlish with him, managed to lose Marx's problem in their angles and recesses. Mazlish notes that Adamson, on second thought, found the pragmatological and nomological to be variants of each other, but this partial collapse of Adamson's system served as a distraction for both commentators: Marx's unresolved problem remained unresolved but forgotten.

In *The Meaning of Karl Marx* Mazlish's common-sense mastery of ideas has won the overwhelming majority of his encounters with the forces of ambiguity and confusion. Marx according to Mazlish is as real as he is great.

Mazlish's interpretation could not have been well or widely received. The root of the problem is massively illustrated by a survey of recent Marxian literature in the United States, with some attention to England and France. The surveyor is Ernst Nolte, the philosophically minded historian of totalitarianism, who found the Marxology industry booming. In an extraordinarily meticulous review article he examined 72 books on Marx and Marxism published between 1980 and 1984, most of them Anglo-American and a few French; he also reported on the existence of the dozen American Marxian journals which he found and on the availability of more than 400 American university courses given per semester on Marxian philosophy.[17] With two or three exceptions the 72 works were written by Marxists for Marxists upon their shared premises and in their idiom. Such fundamental

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agreement is hardly conducive to any real testing of the ideas in question, but Mazlish's book will survive the early stillness to provide it for more demanding readers.

NOTES

1. Heinz Monz, *Karl Marx: Grundlagen der Entwicklung zu Leben und Werk* (Trier: NCO-Verlag, 1973), 215.
2. Acutely shown for the period Jan. 1845–Apr. 1846 in Marx and Engels, *Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)*, series III, vol. 1 (text) (Berlin: Dietz, 1975), 450–531. This is a new edition (the third) of the Marx-Engels works in German, now in process of being printed. At the time Marx was in Brussels and head of his Communist Correspondence Committee.
3. According to Marx in a letter to Engels, Mar. 10, 1853, in Marx and Engels, *Werke*, vol. 28 (Berlin: Dietz, 1963), 224.
4. Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Karl Marx zum Gedächnis* (Nuremberg: Wörlein, 1896), 30.
5. Reprinted as "The Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*" (title by a Soviet editor), Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 3 (New York: International, 1976), 5–129.
6. *Ibid.*, 80.
7. "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right:* Introduction," *ibid.*, 175–87. This is not to be confused with the notes themselves as cited above (n5).
8. *Ibid.*, 186, 187.
9. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3 (New York: International, 1970; based on the 1909 edition translated by Ernest Untermann), 820.
10. *Collected Works*, vol. 1, 640, 642. These quotations, using some different words, are from my own translation of the German of the *Werke* edition.
11. *Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978, 2nd ed.), 4.
12. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Vintage, 1973), 110, 111.
13. Notebook III, *ibid.*, 293–370; quotations, 298.
14. Richard N. Hunt, *The Political Ideas of Marx and Engels*, vol. 1: *Marxism and Totalitarian Democracy* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974), 67.
15. *Ibid.*, 3–16; for the three categories, see n16.
16. Mazlish's discussion refers to Walter L. Adamson's article, "Marx's Four Histories: An Approach to His Intellectual Development," *History and Theory*, Beiheft XX, 20, no. 4, 1981.
17. "Marx und Marxismus in den USA, Grossbritannien und Frankreich 1980–1984," *Neue Politische Literatur* 30, no. 1 (1985): 5–50; details noted above, 6–7, 44.

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Paul Thomas

MARX DEMYTHOLOGIZED OR REMYTHOLOGIZED?

MARX AS POLITICIAN

by David Felix

Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983. 308pp., $27.50

Inside this book there seems at first to be another one, struggling fitfully but unsuccessfully to get out. This other, better book could be constructed readily enough on the basis of *Marx as Politician*'s own sources. Its framework would be David Felix's 51 pages of scholarly, accurate footnotes and his fairly comprehensive 15-page bibliography. With these, Felix wants to show us he has done his homework, as in many ways he has. But not all. The outcome of his endeavors leaves much to be desired. Felix leaves us with the task of trying to explain why his scholarly apparatus fails to produce a more thoroughgoing, worthwhile account of his stated subject-matter.

The reason, as we shall see, is that Felix gets carried away by the presuppositions he imports into his book. His thesis is that "Marx was primarily a politician and not a thinker. . . . As great as Marx was as a thinker . . . he was a greater politician." While this raises questions about how the categories of "politician" and "thinker" are or can be related, in the case of Marx or of anyone else, Felix's way of approaching Marx on the face of things has much to commend it. Marx after all was a revolutionary politician, among other things, and his theories were always supposed to be geared to practice—his own or others'. Felix's *point d'appui* could have proceeded from a salutary, long overdue need to "unpack" the various components of Marx's much-

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heralded, but little-interrogated "revolutionary unity of theory and practice." Such an approach in turn could have helped demythologize Marx by placing his thought in context, instead of treating it as a set of disembodied maxims. There is, we should remember, no good reason to suppose that Marx thought of himself as the sibylline oracle of legend, purveying timeless truths to an anxious posterity. His concerns in the first instance were surely more immediate; his writings, we know, were often occasioned, if not caused, by political disputes—disputes which are today largely forgotten, and would need to be uncovered, then unravelled by a modern interpreter. The implications and effects of these writings were to be more ultimate than immediate, to be sure. The point remains, however, that in assessing Marx we should try to do what Felix says he wants to do, and place him within his own immediate context instead of blithely supposing that he transcended it by virtue of what was to become, after his death, a "world-historical" theory. The point remains also that it would be peremptory to disregard or write off Marx's various, but dedicated forays into the revolutionary politics of his day as having been inconclusive, fruitless, and thus of little real interest.

Perhaps the main drawback of *Marx as Politician* is that the same points remain to be investigated after it has been read. Felix's book tells us nothing about Marx's political activities that could not be encountered in other sources—sources such as Henry Collins and Chimen Abramsky's *Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement,* Alan Gilbert's *Marx's Politics,* and (it ill behooves me to trumpet my own work, but do so I must) Paul Thomas's *Karl Marx and the Anarchists.* These are not exactly recondite or unavailable sources, but none of them feature in Felix's bibliography. Their various accounts of Marx's activities in the 1840s, or in the years of the First International, are much fuller, and far less desultory, than Felix's own. Over and above this shortcoming, Felix is uninterested in interrogating Marx's purported unity of theory and practice; his idea is that since political practice invariably took precedence over his theorizing (a very doubtful proposition for which he advances no real argument), theory, which is contingently rather than necessarily related to practice, is comparatively unimportant. (This is an even more dubious proposition; once again, it is asserted rather than argued). Again, Felix makes no real attempt to contextualize Marx by unravelling his disputes with other revolutionary politicians. Instead, he assumes that all these disputes took the same fundamental form. This means in turn that one important question about Marx's political activities—whether they were as

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fruitless and inconclusive as they have seemed to some commentators—remains not only unsettled but unaddressed. Instead, Felix assumes—and again this is far too easy an assumption—that Marx's politics followed the same general line as Marxist politics after Marx's death. Felix believes that it is part of Marx's "greatness" so successfully to have set the terms, or cast the mold, of all subsequent political action by Marxist political leaders.

This may or may not be true. But it is a large claim, and I doubt whether Felix will persuade many readers of its validity, simply because he offers so little evidence for it. All these points can be made more strongly. *Marx as Politician,* instead of clarifying them, has muddied the waters. The book is untrue to its own, proclaimed intentions. Instead of approaching or attempting to analyze Marx, it confronts, challenges, distorts and parodies his theories. Since these things are done in an untowardly simple-minded way, as we are about to see, a way that shades over into psychologism as well as into a curious form of hero-worship, *Marx as Politician* does not demythologize Marx. It succeeds only in remythologizing him in a different way.

Perhaps the least of this book's shortcomings is its author's weakness for the kind of hyperbole that should never cross an editor's desk unscathed. "Marx," we read in Felix's Preface, "belongs with such politicians as Pericles, Alexander, Caesar, Augustus, Constantine, Cromwell, Napoleon, Lincoln, Disraeli, Gladstone, Bismarck, Lenin, Gandhi, Roosevelt and Charles de Gaulle" (ix). And as if this wasn't ridiculous enough, *Marx as Politician* ends with a flourish: "we are all Marxists in a Marxian world" (218). It would be easy to poke fun at such absurdly inflated claims; but Felix, as we shall see, has a reason for advancing them. We read in his Preface that "[w]ith genial political instinct and urgent will to command, Marx . . . functioned as a leader of men, completely the master of his life situation, since his early twenties. He . . . determined policy as editor of influential German newspapers; he was an active provincial politician during the Revolution of 1848 and head of various revolutionary organizations from the Communist League to the First International" (x). Whatever "genial political instinct" might be—and we are confidently assured that even a schoolboy essay reveals Marx's "thoroughly political sense" (5)—the idea that Marx was "completely the master of his life situation" is preposterous to anyone who (like Felix himself) knows anything about his domestic life—which, for the record, was tragic and squalid in the extreme. But over and above this, how can such an overall assessment jibe with what Felix says in his conclusion ("Memorial")? "If a biog-

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rapher had written the life of Marx at his death in 1883, he would have had to treat his subject as a minor figure, an exiled revolutionary leader of 1848 who had produced writings of a significance as yet undetermined and quite possibly considerable, and the chief personality in an ineffectual international organization, vanished some time ago, of artisans, radicals and cranks. In his lifetime Marx never exercised more immediate power than a provincial politician, a field-grade officer, or the owner of a medium-sized cotton mill" (209).

How can these very different assessments (neither of them indefensible on its own) be reconciled? The answer is of course that "Marx's capacity for leadership always showed itself to be in advance of the powers he commanded" (63), or, better still, that "Marx was ahead of his time. By necessity he was a miniaturist of political operations, perfecting a tiny image which he accurately and gigantically projected onto the future" (x). Somehow—but how?—it was his very "comparative weakness [that] permitted him to gain his world-historical power . . . Marx had shifted his weight forward onto the future." One might be forgiven for thinking that Marx had had every move planned out in advance—which indeed is what Felix, in his unguarded moments (which are many), seems to think. This leads his overwritten account into errors of judgment that are all too frequent, and all too serious.

Marx's eleventh "Thesis" on Feuerbach—"The philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways. The point is, however, to change it"—we are informed, "is a remarkably pure concentrate of egomania and megalomania. Marx, having corrected Hegel and Feuerbach, was claiming that he had completed all the world's essential thinking. It remained only [only!] to transform the world in accordance with the established truths, those truths which Marx alone among mankind completely understood." This completely misleading, indeed nonsensical gloss on the eleventh thesis is but one of the points in Felix's book where hyperbole, prolepsis and cheap psychologizing intersect, with disastrous results.

Not the least of these is that Felix's understanding of "politics" is premised and depends upon statements of this kind. "Marx was the very nearly perfect egomaniac . . . the classic *monstre sacre*. . . . During all of his life he showed the egoism of the infant, who feels that he should be given everything while giving nothing in return" (111). Marx's colossal ego, we are told, "could go over to the attack on family members or friends no longer useful to him. . . . [Marx] pillaged the ideas of the utopian socialists and classical economists, and then

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proceeded to insult [these same] ideas and thinkers. Similarly, praising and denouncing the bourgeoisie at the same time, he directed his force to expropriate its material achievement, modern industry. He raised ingratitude to the level of a principle of action" (114).

Putting to one side the implication that Marx wanted to expropriate the expropriators for his own benefit, and putting to one side the question of what exactly Marx was supposed to have been grateful for, this kind of characterization—the only kind there is in Felix's book—raises, in fact begs, a lot of questions. Marx we learn, had a master-plan for revolutionary politics, the lineaments of which ought to have been evident all along, for those with eyes to see. Marx along with Engels (who otherwise merits scarcely a mention) plotted to insinuate himself within the exiled German communist-artisan movement, to link this to radical German intellectuals at home and abroad, to combine these elements into a viable international revolutionary movement, and to impose his conception of communism upon it. While this may not be too remote from what Marx wanted, and to a considerable degree actually attained, Felix's way of accounting for Marx's success has to be questioned, and rejected. He thinks Marx succeeded because of a series of ruthless enactments of the same egomania and megalomania alredy mentioned. Marx's master-plan is said to have involved a single-minded devotion to the end of revolution, which in turn necessarily involved the flattery and seduction of anyone who was deemed useful to the cause, and their being dropped like hot potatoes the moment they were no longer of any use.

What's wrong with this picture is not that nothing in it ever happened, but that Felix's account of Marx's political career plays and replays it over and over again, like a refrain. Only the victims change. The pattern, of use, abuse, betrayal, stays the same. Once the die is cast, the mold is made; and Marx's die was cast very early indeed. (It seems that as a child he was not nice to his sisters). It would be easy enough to list the successive victims of what Felix terms Marx's infantile sadism. Even though Felix fails to mention many of them, the rest map out the narrative plot of his book. But in a way there's no real need for completeness. After all, what these other political actors stood for, their ideas, ideals, values, commitments, hopes, fears, perceptions and misapprehensions have no part to play in the story Felix has to tell. The political tendencies Marx's opponents espoused are of no account, and are barely gone into at all. All that matters is their common victimhood, their immediate use and ultimate betrayal by Marx.

The reader at this point begins to wonder whether Felix himself

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might have felt betrayed by Marx before he saw the light. More importantly, however, the reader wonders what exactly Felix's supposed exposé of Marx is meant to expose. In seeing through Marx, as Felix thinks he has, what exactly does he see? To put the same question another way, what was Marx, the endlessly manipulative master-mind, bent upon? Most of us would say "revolution," but David Felix would howl us down; "revolution," in his opinion, is just another "abstraction" of the kind that populates and obscures Marx's theoretical writings. What Marx was really bent upon, according to Felix, was power—not the triumph of one set of ideas over others, but power in the sense of personal self-assertion. Ideas and ideals are finally nothing but a reflex of this drive, no matter what Marx may have believed, or claimed to believe.

At this point we must forcefully protest, at a number of different levels. The first is that of sheer and illegitimate reductionism. If indeed Marx's real goal was power, why, we might ask, did he not choose a more profitable arena for its exercise than a life of poverty, exile and intrigue? (To have been a "field-grade officer or the owner of a medium-sized cotton mill" might have offered him more scope.) Felix's answer to this question, which is that in his chosen arena Marx could actually succeed, enables him simultaneously to extol Marx—he succeeded in accomplishing what he set out to accomplish, and Felix likes success—and to excoriate him, since Marx's mode of success was in essence no different from those of Lenin, Stalin or any other "successful" politician who adopted the Marxist mantle or fitted himself into the mold Marx had made.

Whether or not Marx should be re-inscribed within the logic of the Cold War in this or any other way is of course a vexed question. The point remains that Felix's scenario makes sense only if we overlook something basic, not about Marx but about politics. There is no reason to suppose that Marx, within his chosen domain, was uninterested in power, or that he was always capable of separating a desire for power from the ideas about society and revolution he wished to propagate. But there is every reason to insist that politics, even as Marx understood and practiced politics, is not just about power but about values and ideas—ideas about how society should better or best be organized and run. Felix has remarkably little to say about such ideas; there is no need to paint Marx *couleur de rose* to see that he had a great deal to say about them. That doing so involved criticizing other views Marx regarded as misleading and destructive is not in doubt. What is

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in doubt is Felix's understanding of what was at issue in these various disputes. In the guise of writing about Marx as politician, he has written a profoundly unpolitical book.

Felix's curious elevation of Marx as a politician depends upon a correspondingly curious derogation of Marx as a theorist and upon a derogation of theory as being nothing more than a set of "abstractions" that end by concealing what "really" motivates political actors: power. It is important to Felix's argument that "Marx, one of the world's greatest thinkers, showed that he did not take ideas seriously when the needs of action conflicted with them. As usual, the politician dominated the thinker" (201). It is important not because Felix can adduce any actual evidence in its support—he cannot, and the evidence in any case happens to point in a very different direction. It is important because it enables Felix not to take ideas seriously—except perhaps the "idea" that politics means leadership means power. It is on the level of ideas that Felix's book, which was never on strong ground in the first place, finally comes to grief. It tells us that Marx, in the "Critique of the Gotha Program," "even attacked his own ideas as reflected back accurately enough in the program" (189), which demonstrates only that Felix's understanding of what was at issue in 1875 is skin-deep. For a book that is supposed to be about Marx as a politician, this simply won't do. But by now such a shortcoming is predictable enough. Felix looks at Marx's 1843 essay "On the Jewish Question" and finds in it nothing but anti-Semitism—which of course is what he was looking for all along, since he believes that Marx's particular variant of Jewish self-hatred helps explain his "psychoses," his sadism, his wilfulness and, of course, his politics. (Felix's point that Nazism seen as National Socialism "was an accurate name for the party Marx would like to have led in Germany in 1848–9, nationalistic, socialistic and as anti-Semitic as tactically useful" [217] is simply beneath contempt).

It is in dealing with *Capital,* however, that all of Felix's badly-drawn lines finally come together. He simply cannot deal with *Capital*'s theoretical arguments. His attempts to fathom these are positively embarrassing. Since he evidently feels confused by them, Felix is content to characterize them as confusing. "Many of the great verbal storms in Marx's writings are confusions," Felix patiently explains, "the last defenses thrown up by his will against the logic of the enemy, his intelligence" (119). *Capital* is evidently a case in point, but it still poses problems for Felix. On the one hand, *Capital* is "a scholastic tangle" (140); on the other hand, it is "a literary-humane achievement

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of the highest order" (148), as well as "the most profound study of industrial society ever made and a classic statement of the human condition" (ix). It follows from the foregoing that *Capital* has to be all of these things at once, for reasons having to do not with the arguments of its three volumes, which by this stage are left high and dry, but for those having to do with Felix's contradictory interpretation of Marx. The question remains, however: how are Felix's disparate characterizations to be reconciled? No prizes for guessing. Inevitably, "the subject of *Capital* is power. Marx exercised power incessantly. . . . Most of his writings are concerned with power, the *Communist Manifesto* most explicitly so. Marx wrote *Capital* to attain power. He manipulated the reader as he manipulated himself through his own confusions and mystifications. *Capital* did not seek to elucidate the economics of the world. It set out to conquer the world through economics as understood and arbitrarily misunderstood by Marx" (153).

It is evident that the "confusions and mystifications" are in this passage Felix's, not Marx's. He pulls out "power" like a rabbit from a hat, is caught short by the fact that *Capital* is in no obvious sense about power at all, shifts his ground (*Capital* is now a means to power, not a book about it) and seems unaware of having done so, then accuses *Marx* of "arbitrary misunderstanding"! While this series of assertions is closer to free association than to reasoned argument, and while it provokes the thought that Felix, in accusing Marx of what he himself is guilty of, manages to give himself away and hoist himself on his own petard, it has one curious feature that may be of some interest. This is the buried assumption that Marx was influential and powerful not despite his confusion but because he was confused. Confusion, it seems, gets results. "The League of Nations and the United Nations," says Felix (for some reason), "can be dismissed as the dwarf products of other illusions that, compared with [Marx's], are empty and infertile" (213). This helps us come to some understanding of Felix's rather nasty notion of power. It is intransitive. It consists in being strong and wilful enough to foist your illusions on to other people, in bamboozling them, in pulling the wool over their eyes, and making them do things for you they wouldn't otherwise do. To specify that this is a foreshortened view of power would be to labor the obvious. What is less obvious but more chilling is the mean and low view of human nature buried in it. Suppose we ask whether the illusions in question really are illusory, or how illusory they are. Felix would have to answer that these questions don't matter. There are "fertile," powerful

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illusions, like Marx's, which work, and there are barren, empty illusions that don't. So there. If nihilism didn't already have a bad name, this book alone would be enough to give it one.

Felix does a disservice not only to Marx but also to anyone who fails to share Felix's belief that political values are meaningless or "abstract" (his favorite term of opprobrium). In this Felix cannot be criticized roundly enough. His book comes to us under false pretenses. Felix adds nothing to our understanding of Marx. What he sees, adopts and dwells obsessively upon is what hardly anyone could miss: the posthumous effectiveness of a set of Marx's writings. This impresses him. It means that these writings have power. Because they have power, Marx must also have had power—power over people in his own lifetime. Marx, having such power, must have behaved the way all great, successful, powerful politicians behave. He must have developed indifference to other human beings, he must have trained himself to develop a monomaniacal tunnel vision, he must have lurked behind his own smoke-screen of ideals, values, beliefs and "abstractions," predatory and ready to pounce on those who were stupid enough to be taken in by them. Marx's status as a theorist as well as a politician complicates this picture, but not unduly; politics always came first and, in any case, it is not difficult to hoodwink people with confused ideas. The content, bearing and truth-value of these ideas is in any case incidental, not central. In the end, nothing succeeds like success.

Felix accordingly leads us into such absurdities as the idea that Marx failed to recognize the humanity of workers: "recognition of their humanity would have distracted him from his world-historical task. He could not have functioned effectively without that selective indifference which is the professional deformation of the politician" (123). The confusions here are practically encyclopedic. To begin with, Felix is evidently assuming what his book ought to examine and does not, whether Marx actually did "function effectively" as a politician. Had he examined this question, Felix might have come up with something that is mightily inconvenient to his argument, but which is nevertheless true: that Marx, who criticized capitalism relentlessly for its refusal to recognize the humanity of workers, recognized it himself to the extent of spending a great deal of time and energy organizing workers for the sake of overthrowing capitalism. This obvious basic truth ought to be in the foreground of any account of Marx as a politician. But it is the very point that Felix has to downplay for the sake of his argument, an argument that owes nothing to the evidence and

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everything to its author's *position déjà prise*. This is not scholarship but charlatanry of the worst stripe. Felix accuses Marx of suppressing or flying in the face of evidence, and of pushing everything out of his path for the sake of advancing a set of assertions. That he cannot see that he is guilty of what he accuses Marx of having done serves only to indicate that cynics are finally the greatest innocents of all.

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J. G. Merquior

FROM MARCIONISM TO MARXISM

GEORG LUKÁCS AND HIS GENERATION 1900–1918

by Mary Gluck

Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985. 265pp., $25.00

Building on recent documentary research, notably by Eva Karádi[1] on the youth of Georg Lukács and his Budapest "Sunday Circle," Mary Gluck, a historian at Brown University, has drawn a perceptive intellectual portrait of a generation. Without blurring the focus on its main figure, Lukács, she casts new light on a few further members, some destined to world celebrity, like Karl Mannheim, others just local stars, such as the art critic Lajos Fülep or the playwright Béla Balázs, in whose Biedermeier flat in Buda the circle's meetings coalesced at the close of 1916.

As we know from Lee Congdon's fine study. *The Young Lukács,*[2] the *Sonntagskreis* was a brilliant coterie of (mostly Jewish) young bourgeois artists and intellectuals, all born in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Besides Balázs, Lukács and Mannheim, it included art historians of future distinction such as Charles de Tolnay, Arnold Hauser and Frederick (Frigyes) Antal (not "Antal Frigyes," as the Gluck book has it). Composers Zoltan Kodály and Béla Bartók, the

The author's books include *Rousseau and Weber* (Routledge, 1980), *Foucault* (Univ. of California, 1985), *Western Marxism* (Paladin, 1986) and *From Prague to Paris: A Critique of Structuralist & Post-Structuralist Thought* (Verso, 1986).

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philosopher Michael Polanyi and the economist Eugene Varga were occasional visitors. But Gluck also takes a closer look at the female membership, offering us inter alia a moving vignette of the gifted Anna Lesznai. Her book does not deal with the "young Lukács" in the conventional sense, i.e., his early Marxism; unlike Congdon, she concentrates exclusively on the pre-Marxist essays and aesthetic treatises of the man who was to become, thanks to *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), the greatest of Marxist *philosophes*. Tracing back the formative steps of the Sunday Circle intelligentsia to the decadent mold of Belle Epoque culture, Gluck rightly describes their "cultural radicalism" as a twofold experience. First, those restless Hungarians evinced the uncompromising yet despondent rejectionism familiar from fin-de-siècle aestheticism. Then, around 1910, they embraced various forms of cultural chiliasm, becoming in the process as antidecadent as the rising avant-gardes of the time. In Gluck's own words, "they experienced almost simultaneously both the self-consciously negative, anti-bourgeois impulses commonly associated with the aesthetes of the 1880s and the affirmative, utopian hopes for cultural renewal more characteristic of the artistic generation of the immediate prewar years" (1–2).

But why were they such stark rejectionists of modern social culture in the first place? To Lukács, as he put it in his *Theory of the Novel* (1916), modernity was, in Fichtean language, "the age of absolute sinfulness." Yet the Sunday Circle folks were almost to a soul the scions of an enriched, sometimes (as in Lukács's case) even ennobled Jewry whose very nouveau-richisme went hand-in-hand with a deeply felt identification with liberal progressivism. To Magyarized Jews like Lukács *père* (originally Loewinger), high culture was a status symbol crowning a remarkable success story. Better still: as Carl Schorske (quoted by Gluck) has pointed out, the Jewish bourgeoisie of Hapsburgland, unable to either beat or join the closed ranks of the still ruling aristocracy (as opposed the lower nobility), made culture into a true ladder to honor and access.

In their assimilation these bourgeois Jews of the liberal age became staunch nationalists. To them Hungarian nationalism—at last rewarded (after the defeat of 1848) in the halcyon decades of the Dual Monarchy—was quite compatible with Victorian liberalism and its natural vindication of modernity. However, as Gluck shows in her background chapters (2 and 3), by 1900 nationalism in Hungary shifted, rather ominously, to reaction and rampant anti-Semitism, and therefore ceased to represent a viable stance for young intellectuals. During the 1890s an angry, déclassé gentry drove Hungary from elite

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liberalism to a reactionary populism prone to racism—a development none too comfortable to a Jewry that, though accounting for just 5% of the country's population, gave it half its businessmen, bankers, doctors and lawyers. So instead of Magyarizing like his father, the young Lukács stopped writing in Hungarian right after his first essay collection, *Soul and Forms* (1910).

No wonder, then, if the future members of the Sunday Circle used to entertain "a whole private mythology about the difficulties of serious artistic and intellectual endeavors in Hungary" (23). Dramatizing Simmel's notion of an increasing gap between "subjective" and "objective" culture,[3] they gave the antinomy of self and ossified culture a local habitation and a name: postliberal Hungary, where, in their view, all genuine artistic and metaphysical attempts were bound to exude a fundamental estrangement from society. They felt, as Gluck is quick to say, as though they constituted an accursed, tragic version of what one of them, Mannheim, was famously to call a "free-floating intellectualdom." For even in their short aestheticist stage they thought of intellectual life as a predicament, never as decadent spectacle.

Quite soon, as they entered the second decade of the twentieth century, they moved away from aestheticism and impressionism. For Lukács this meant first and foremost a farewell to his erstwhile Berlin master, Georg Simmel. Lukács went as far as to dub him "the Manet of philosophy." From a decadent concern with authenticity in art and selfhood, the *Sonntagskreis* embarked on a quest for wholeness and the absolute.

The way was shown by those of Lukács's friends who were devoted to the visual arts: Fülep and especially the beloved (and short-lived) Leo Popper. They mounted an attack on the impressionist indulgence in the fleeting fragment by playing off Cézanne against Monet and Rodin (significantly, the sculptor was one of Simmel's heroes).[4] Equally, the "soul" concept in *Soul and Forms* is no dandy-like artifice of the self. Rather, it is a source of lofty existential choices. The "forms" are just symbols of the soul's heroic shots at imposing meaning on the untidy facticity of life.

By the same token, the soul-and-form outlook had little in common with *Erlebnis*, the master concept within the *Lebensphilosophie* of Dilthey and Simmel. For whereas the *Erlebnis* encapsulated the flow of inner life, the ethicist, Kierkegaardian "soul" in Lukács displayed a moral pathos virtually absent from that "unlimited impressionability" which was for Simmel a trademark of the modern mind. Significantly, even the arch-critic of decadence, Nietzsche, seemed to Fülep (sup-

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ported by Lukács) too much of an individualist to serve as a building block of the new culture.

To a large extent, the shift towards wholeness and the absolute within the *Sonntagskreis* reminds one of the Western modernists' impatience with the volubility and negativism of the earlier modern, i.e., postromantic tradition. Gluck herself points out (5–6) that the longing for unity, affirmation, and simplicity in Lukács's essays since 1910 was akin to the contemporary revulsion of a D. H. Lawrence against the "nihilism and hopelessness" underlying the art of realists such as Flaubert, Ibsen or Hardy. Again, if one agrees with Michael Levenson that Anglomodernism was individualist before turning anti-individualist and inclined to anarchism before embracing authoritarianism, as can be easily seen in the evolution of Hulme and the young Pound,[5] then the analogy with the reorientation of the intellectual avant-garde in Budapest is once more enhanced.

Still more convincingly, the same trend clearly obtained in a cultural center much closer to Hungary: Vienna. There the pervasive impressionist ethos of the age of Mach, Mahler, Hofmannsthal and Schnitzler gave way, also in the second decade, to the purist and ethicist temper of Wittgenstein I, Schoenberg, Loos and Kraus—all famous foes of aestheticism and decadence.

Gluck sees that her Budapest intellectuals shared with the Western modernists a utopian vision of cultural rebirth. She grasps the kinship between their own overcoming of aestheticism and impressionism and the stern spiritual demands made by assertive pioneers of modern art such as Apollinaire and Kandinsky (172–73). However, she also realizes that for all these similarities of tone or general intent, Lukács and his group were at bottom foreign to the avant-garde sensibility (9), not least because they stuck to some key humanistic values in art and culture. Inevitably, they clashed with the Hungarian artistic avant-garde formed (in 1915) roughly at the same time of the Circle's institutionalization. Thus, in 1920 Vienna there was a heated polemic between two Hungarian exiles, Balázs and the artist Lajos Kassák, a leader of the avant-garde who prided himself on being in touch with Marinetti and Dada and was rebuked by Balázs for his "hysterical anarchism" (216–18).

Mercifully free of avant-garde idolatry, Gluck ends her book by surmising that the very traditional, humanist element in the Budapest intellectuals made their critique of industrial civilization shrewder and more consistent than that of the modernist artists. One can accept this evaluation without necessarily conceding the premise that their animus against modernity was wise, in the sense of fully justified.

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We shall return to this point later on. But for the moment let us notice a further, very important aspect of the 1910 turnabout of Lukács and his generation. They plugged their search for absolutes into an unabashed craving for social wholes, thus betraying what Popper (Karl, not Leo) would call a strong tribalist streak. In Lukács this holist pathos was already visible in some texts contemporary with the earlier essays of *Soul and Forms*, such as his 1907 discussion of Gauguin (consistently and distressingly misspelt as "Gaugin" in Gluck's book). Gluck aptly notes that through a forced reading of the painter's own account, Lukács presented Gauguin's life in Tahiti as a blissful experience of community (131). The same *Gemeinschaftslust* animates Lukács's main blow against aestheticism, the essay "Aesthetic culture" (1910). There Lukács denounces the modern aesthete as one more avatar of the specialist—the very human type severed by definition from the healing faith in ultimate, global ends. The nostalgia for homogeneous cultural totalities is also most conspicuous in the *kulturkritische* framework of the *Theory of the Novel*, both in its initial evocation of ancient Greece and in its concluding paean to Dostoevsky's recurrent beckoning to a Christian *parousia*.

The Sunday Circle's cold-shouldering of Dada-like avant-gardes stemmed from the same source. What bothered Balázs in Kassák's anarchism was its blatant unconcern for the absolute, for the eternal value of form and the memory/hope of social harmony. The antiform of Dada displayed no dream of totality. Its Dionysian antidecadence spelt nihilism, not that ethical impulse earnestly urged by Lukács—a young thinker who reacted to bereavement (at the suicide of his Regina Olsen, Irma Seiddler, and at the death of Leo Popper) with gloomy musings over morality as mystique.

Thus the basic equations needed for understanding the intellectual coming of age of Lukács & Co. around 1910 seem to be: impressionism = decadence = aestheticism *versus* "tragic" art (the soul-and-form problem) = cultural chiliasm (the "new culture") = ethicism. Which obviously puts our Budapest moralists closer (up to a point) to Vienna puritans like Loos and Kraus than to the nihilism of Western modernists, as embodied in the dissonant neodecadence from *Prufrock* to the *Waste Land* or the willed chaos of Dada. (Even those who reject the *toto coelo* identification of modernism with nihilism, e.g., most cogently, Ricardo Quinones,[6] do not deny the presence of a strong negativistic drive in *early* modernism; on the other hand, the significance, increasingly acknowledged, of Austrian modernism and its unmistakable ethical accent shows that one can't be too careful when generalizing about the moral meaning of modernism).

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From Community to Communism

At any rate, what specifically belonged to the Budapest cultural radicals of 1910–18 was a peculiar combination of ethicism and *Gemeinschaftslust*. Unlike most modernist iconoclasts, they were not just cultural chiliasts but believers in rebirth through a reconquest of totality—dreamers, that is, of utopian wholes. This is as good a point as any to approach Gluck's contention that Lukács's leap into communism by late 1918 (at age 39) was by no means an inevitable outcome of his previous cultural radicalism. After all, neither Mannheim nor Hauser (not to speak of Anna Lesznai) took the same path: neither of them ever joined the CP.

If she is right, Michael Löwy's thesis that the anticapitalist and antibourgeois cast of mind of the preMarxist Lukács did powerfully predispose him to his communist conversion[7] stands corrected. As Edward Timms had already demurred, the antibourgeois stance in pre-1919 Lukács is anything but neat. Was not that masterpiece essay in *Soul and Forms,* the chapter on Theodor Storm, redolent with nostalgic praise for old bourgeois virtues like the ethics of craft and calling? As for the alienation theme, which even Congdon tends to see as evidence for continuity between the pre- and the Marxist Lukács, Timms thinks it far less prominent than sheer loneliness—a moral motif of Kierkegaardian rather than Marxian imprint.[8]

In addition, one has to agree with Andrew Arato and Paul Breines: up to 1918, whenever Lukács was close to Marxism—for instance, in his *History of the Development of Modern Drama* (written 1906–1909, published 1911)—he was furthest from a theory of revolution; conversely, when he was most critical of bourgeois culture (and therefore, if implicitly, at his most revolutionary), as in parts of *Soul and Forms,* in the mystical ethics of "On Poverty of Spirit" (1911) and, of course, the *Theory of the Novel,* his categories were least Marxist, or Marxist-like.[9]

If the more "revolutionary" he sounded, the less Marxist was his thought, Gluck must be right in insisting that Lukács's espousal of political Marxism in late 1918 was by no means necessitated by his prior thinking. Nevertheless, I'm afraid there is something amiss here. True as it is—especially as far as the letter of Lukács's pre-1918 writings is concerned—Gluck's thesis needs qualification. For in making Lukács's communist option too contingent, one ends up by missing the situational logic of a whole mood or cast of mind. Indeed, what Gluck calls "the politicization of Lukács's religious vision" (194), the communization of his Dostoevskyan mystique of brotherhood and community,

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was not altogether unprepared by several recurrent lines of thought in his prepolitical phase. True, Leninism was just one possible choice among others for an intellectual of Lukács's sort at that crucial juncture. Yet his way of espousing it carried over more than one trait of his youthful mentality and worldview. The mistake of interpreters like Löwy, all too eager to vindicate Leninism out of loyalty to humanist *Kulturkritik,* is that they tend to look for the continuity between the two Lukácses at a thematic level, instead of inspecting a deeper layer of convergence, that of conceptual structures.

As soon as one takes this approach, several bridges between the young Lukács proper and the early Marxist Lukács suggest themselves. The chief one is, I submit, precisely that chiliastic holism which already ran through his essays from the time of *Soul and Forms* to the war years of *Theory and the Novel,* in counterpoint to the bitter *Kulturpessimismus* of both books. Now insofar as it was a massive yet compact (and thereby quite un-Marxian) indictment of modern civilization, this very *kulturkritische* salvo was itself a further bridge between the pre-Marxist and the Marxist Lukács. What was downright condemned by the theory of reification presented in the 1923 volume was modern culture as a whole, and not just capitalist social structure. Thus in both the *Theory of the Novel* and *History and Class Consciousness* the cultural landscape presented truly apocalyptic colors.

Another element of continuity was the ethicism of the young Lukács. For underneath its Hegelian facade of subject theory, *History and Class Consciousness* was pretty un-Marxist (and un-Hegelian) in its highminded stark negation of actual history. Even the "historical situation" invoked right at the beginning of the work is no real historical process—it is just a highly hypothetical state of affairs, offering the proletariat an opportunity to lift itself above its own lack of class consciousness by creating a new totality through revolutionary praxis. Not surprisingly, before his conversion Lukács had not been immune to the spell of the Hungarian Sorelian Erwin Szabó. For Szabó's "ethical socialism" was a militant anarcho-syndicalism as proudly innocent of historical materialism as it was hostile to political struggle. Finally, that Lukács's first Marxism has deserved the name of "culture communism"[10] says much about its rank neoidealist flavor—and again, his own idea of culture before 1918 was nothing if not idealist, even messianically so (culture in his eyes was nothing less than the total meaning of life).

In a perceptive book (unquoted by Gluck) the German expert on the young Lukács, Rainer Rochlitz, suggests that the aesthetics of to-

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tality was the only universalism available to bourgeois humanists at the dawn of this century.[11] As with most epigones of *Kulturkritik,* Rochlitz simply assumes that in the age of imperialism the European bourgeoisie, having fallen from the moral heights of Kantian ethics, had to preserve whatever was left of their former ethicity via aesthetics, sublimating social utopias into works of art.

A more rewarding clue, in my judgment, is to try to reconstitute Lukács's own atmosphere of thought without endorsing the biases of either his apocalyptic humanism in the 1910s or of his metaphysical Leninism in the twenties. A striking ingredient of the former was its Marcionism. The Marcionist label was revived in the interwar years by the Austrian feuilletonist-philosopher of history Egon Friedell.[12] In the second century A.D. the gnostic Marcion, preaching in Rome, held that the God of the Jews was an evil demiurge. Creation was a trap from which Christ had to come and deliver mankind. Rekindling a Marcionist cast of mind in Bohemia and Austria in the early twentieth century, world-rejectionists such as Franz Kafka, Franz Werfel and Gustav (*The Golem*) Meyrink broke with an older worldview long prevalent in the Danube area. This was the providentialist creed that, harking back to Leibniz via the Josephine Enlightenment, asserted a fundamental harmony between God and his creation.

Now the cultural criticism of Lukács in his books of essays as well as his aesthetics in his Heidelberg years (1912–17) were shot through with Marcionist themes. As Anna Lesznai noticed in her diary, for Lukács art was "a *countercreation*" (161)—hence his use of the adjective "Luciferian," to denote that the splendor of the "inner" world of art and culture is the very opposite of real life. Ernst Bloch, a decisive influence on Lukács in Heidelberg, was the first to explain that the Luciferian concept was borrowed "from our great teacher Marcion."[13]

For Marcionists, ancient or modern, the social world and its institutions are worthless. The Marcionic world is a hellish mess, in dire need of replacement by a good totality. Since she devotes a whole chapter to Lukács's and Bloch's metaphysical attempts and is well aware of their "religious vision," it is a pity that Gluck does not explore the Marcionist leitmotif. For it was indeed this resolute social acosmism, this passionate rejection of the world, that fed the metaphysical hunger of Bloch and Lukács. As Lukács himself confessed, he was awakened to the legitimacy of grand metaphysics by Bloch. And as he put it in the *Heidelberg Aesthetics,* the gist of metaphysics was man's effort "to transcend his sense of separateness from the universe"

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(152). This "sense" was fueled by the premise of the utter worthlessness of the world as it is.

Furthermore, the Marcionist, i.e., extremist view of the world as the seat of sinful untidiness legitimized the almost puritanical Lukácsian (but not Blochian) pathos of order—a psychological element stressed by his best interpreters. Unfortunately, such craving for order would end up by placating itself in the glorification of Bolshevik dictatorship. Lukács well earned his immortal portrait in Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* as Naphta, the red Jesuit, a fine mind self-abased in the passion for totality and authority.

Bloch and Lukács were noted in Heidelberg for both their "new religiosity" ("eschatologism," said Max Weber) and for their antiliberalism (i.e., their holism). While Lukács fascinated Weber in Heidelberg, the story of their affectionate relationship should not obscure their persistent differences. To begin with, Weber seems to have misunderstood the real nature of Lukács's early aesthetics. He thought of it as a neo-Kantian exercise probing deep into the specificity of a cultural sphere, art—a task obviously well tailored to Weber's own Rickertian concern with a plurality of autonomous cultural realms. Alas, Lukács's treatise soon came to be dominated by a burning search for the moral meaning of art—of art as Luciferian transcendence, redeeming man from the "horrible inadequacy of life" (as he phrased it in his obituary of Leo Popper) and, especially, to be sure, from the ugliness of modernity. As Ferenc Féher saw, Lukács's seemingly neo-Kantian question—*"es gibt Kunstwerke, wie sind sie möglich?"*—actually implied another: How are artworks possible in this nasty world, where all genuine culture is regarded as something alien?[14]

The accomplished Lukácsiologist, Eva Karádi, has suggested that in Heidelberg Weber and Bloch struggled for the soul of Lukács[15] (Mary Gluck is disappointingly brief on the Weber-Lukács relationship, a serious flaw in her otherwise informative book). Weber tried hard to win Lukács over to academic philosophy (under the training of Heinrich Rickert). For a moment it seemed as though Lukács the essayist was going to turn into an aesthetic epistemologist, boldly reshaping art philosophy by concentrating on the work itself instead of focusing (as did mainstream aesthetics from the romantics to Nietzsche) on the artist. Then the war broke out; hecatomb followed. Lukács's apocalyptic views suddenly looked vindicated. The laborious conceptual disquisitions of academic thought were brushed aside as hardly relevant. The crisis years clearly pushed Lukács back to his old ethical mysticism, to the point where Weber mentioned him (in the

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famous lecture "Politics as a Vocation") as the quintessential *Gesinnungsethiker,* a perfect specimen of the noble yet irresponsible ethic of conviction.

While science and individualism remained to the last central values to Weber ("he did not believe in the possibility of an ethical homogenization of the world," in Karádi's[16] pithy comment), Lukács went on strengthening his old irrationalist and holistic leanings, drifting far away from Weber's tortured liberalism. With the progress of war and its hell on earth the Blochian forces gained the upper hand in Lukács's soul, causing his leap into communism and (after a Luxemburgian spell) into Leninism. This leap occurred even as Weber wrote him that "these experiments" (i.e., those of Bolshevik Revolution) "can only have and will have the consequence of discrediting socialism for the coming hundred years." And so they have.

There is a puzzle in the evolution of the thought of the young Lukács. After the flirtation with Dostoevskyan morality adumbrated in 1911 and then resumed more forcefully in 1916 (*The Theory of the Novel* was a fragment of an unfinished book on Dostoevsky), briefly, after all the proto-existentialist tension of the morality mystique, Lukács staunchly and surprisingly ruled out any art-into-life move. Rochlitz points out[17] that while the *Theory of the Novel* (under the big messianic shadow of the great Russian) raised the prospect of a living metaphysics—a redeeming new totality—the *Heidelberg Aesthetics,* written from 1916 to 1918, bars precisely such a possibility: in its pages, the utopia of totality returns to its strictly aesthetic cocoon.

Yet it was clearly a case of *reculer pour mieux sauter.* The Marcionist world-denial was just the other side of the ethicist coin and its pathos of order. So the leap into a ruthless positive faith was, in fact, inbuilt in Lukács's *Weltanschauung* almost from the start. The Naphta figure was a distinct possibility arising from the mind that was so keen on dramatic Kierkegaardian choices and so attracted to Dostoevskyan dreams. The option of political asceticism arose quite naturally out of moral mysticism.

Deep in German Romanticism there had been a curious movement: under the shock of the Revolution, the romantic mind proceeded to an *internalization of revolution,* the pursuit of a momentous overhaul in Western consciousness. Now, when he launched Western Marxism in the 1920s, Lukács did it the other way round: he marched from a late Romantic *Kulturkritik* to social revolutionism.

As we saw, the concrete conceptual path for such a shift was the ethicization of aestheticism begun in *Soul and Forms* and relentlessly

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continued until the eve of Lukács's communist conversion. And the outcome, in terms of the history of the Marxist idea, was earthshaking. Marxism as originally intended—charter for social science—never actually recovered from this fateful ethico-culturalist embrace. For while what the young Lukács injected into Marxist theory was a poison highly delectable to the modern intellectual—*hysterical humanism*—the end result of the romance between *Kulturkritik* and Marxism surely altered far more the latter than the former. Whereas the *Kulturkritik* just changed political trains, going left after having long been a specialty of the right, Marxism was largely deprived of its Enlightenment heritage and especially of its sociological bite, lost in the fog of a historiosophy whose opera of totality had no room or taste for the sober analysis of social constraints and of the mechanics of social change.[18]

As for the old Lukács, having come to his sensees and made his peace with history and many an aspect of "bourgeois," i.e., modern culture, he called his own youthful tantrums "romantic anticapitalism." Alas, his mature work, including masterpieces of literary criticism like *The Historical Novel* (1938, published 1955), his monumental *Aesthetics* (1963) and his cogent attck on modernism never got half the praise, or even the interest, so generously accorded to his brilliant, seminal yet profoundly unfair and misconceived critique of modernity.[19] Lukács the repentant antimodern (turned into a lucid antimodernist) proved far less influential than the young essayist who, despite many genuine insights into European literature, was at bottom a dogmatic irrationalist at loggerheads with modern history.

NOTES

1. Cf. E. Karádi and E. Vezer, eds., *Georg Lukács, Karl Mannheim und der Sonntagskreis* (Frankfurt: Sendler, 1985).
2. Lee Congdon, *The Young Lukács* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).
3. For the subjective/objective culture distinction, see the last chapter in Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* (1900), trans. T. Bottomore and D. Frisby (Boston: Routledge, 1978). Simmel himself dramatized it a decade later by introducing the concept of the "tragedy of culture"; see his essay "The Concept and Tragedy of Culture" in G. Simmel, *The Conflict in Modern Culture and Other Essays* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), and the comments in David Frisby, *Georg Simmel* (New York: Tavistock, 1984), 107–110.

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4. Cf. Simmel, "Rodin" in *Philosophische Kultur* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt, 1911), well discussed in D. Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985), 62–64.
5. Michael H. Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine, 1908–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 79.
6. Ricardo Quinones. *Mapping Literary Modernism: Time and Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
7. Michael Löwy, *Pour une sociologie des intellectuels révolutionnaires* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976).
8. Edward Timms, "Mr. Lukács changes trains" (a review of *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence 1902–1920,* ed. Judith Marcus and Zoltan Tar (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), *London Review of Books,* February 19, 1987: 8–9.
9. Andrew Arato & Paul Breines, *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 1979), 54–55 (American ed., New York: Seabury Press, 1979). The leading Latin American Lukácsian, Leandro Konder, concurs that the *Drama History* completed in 1909 marks the greatest conceptual proximity between Lukács and Marxism before the 1918 conversion; see his *Lukács* (Porto Alegre: L & PM, 1980), 22.
10. I found no better title for my chapter on Lukács in J. G. Merquior, *Western Marxism,* London: Collins, 1986.
11. Rainer Rochlitz, *Le Jeune Lukács—théorie de la forme et philosophie de l'histoire* (Paris: Payot, 1983), 19.
12. The Marcionist theme was introduced by Friedell's unfinished *Kulturgeschichte des Altertums: Leben und Legende der vorchristlichen Seele* (Zurich/London: 1936–1949). See also ch. 18 in William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual History 1848–1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).
13. For Bloch's words, see M. Mesterházi and G. Mezei, eds., *Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács. Dokumente. Zum 100 Geburtstag* (Budapest: 1984), 302, as quoted in Eva Karádi, "Ernst Bloch and Georg Lukács in Max Weber's Heidelberg" in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jurgen Osterhammel, eds., *Max Weber and His Contemporaries* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 499–514, esp. 513.
14. Cf. F. Féher, "Am Scheideweg des romantischen Antikapitalismus," in Agnes Heller et al., *Die Seele und das Leben. Sudien zum fruhen Lukács* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977).
15. E. Karádi, essay quoted in n13 above.
16. Karádi, 508.
17. Rochlitz, 367.
18. This much was grasped by some of the first critics of *History and Class Consciousness,* for instance, Siegfried Marck; see his review, published in 1924 and reprinted in S. Marck et al., *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*

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heute (Amsterdam: de Munter, 1971). Of course, it is perfectly possible to play down the scientific side of the Marxist idea and stress the soteriological stratum of the doctrine, as great scholars like Ernst Topitsch (*Sozialphilosophie zwischen Mythos und Wissenschaft* [Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1961]), or, most eloquently, Leszek Kolakowski (*Main Currents of Marxism,* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1978]) have done. In this case, one is bound to conclude with Kolakowski (vol. 3, 297–99) that the first and greatest gospel of Western Marxism, *History and Class Consciousness,* actually disclosed the mythological gist of Marxism. For a recent comment on the vexing question of the real nature of Marxism, see J. G. Merquior, "Glasnost, Please, in Marxology Too," *Government and Opposition* 22, no. 3 (London: Summer 1987): 302–14.

19. For a reliable discussion of Lukács's later *Aesthetics,* cf. Bela Kiralyfalvi, *The Aesthetics of György Lukács* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). For a rich account of the taming of the utopian spirit in Lukács's aesthetics and literary criticism see Tito Perlini, *Utopia e prospettiva in Gyorgy Lukács* (Bari: Dedalo, 1968). Perlini, an Adornian, correctly sees (and wrongly deplores) that in the old Lukács the utopian element "ceases to be an immediate and irreducibly subjective move" of protest against social reality (312).

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Sonia Kruks

WESTERN MARXISM: A TALE OF WOE?

WESTERN MARXISM

by J. G. Merquior

London: Paladin Books, 1986. 247pp., £3.95

It was with the work of Merleau-Ponty that the term "Western Marxism" came into contemporary intellectual currency. In the period immediately after World War II, Merleau-Ponty was himself what later commentators have called a "Western" Marxist: he was committed to developing a humanistic synthesis of Marxism and existential phenomenology, in opposition to what he regarded as the erroneously scientistic and reductionist "orthodox" Marxism of the Stalinized French Communist Party.[1] Paradoxically, however, Merleau-Ponty did not use the term himself until he wrote *Adventures of the Dialectic* (1955), the work in which he finally abandoned the attempt at such a synthesis. Looking back over Marxist theory and practice since 1917, and concluding that since history had not borne out the truth of Marxism it could no longer be considered privileged, Merleau-Ponty used the term to refer to the early work of Lukács, particularly *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). In this work, Lukács had developed a Hegelianized interpretation of Marxism in which dialectical relations of subjectivity and objectivity in history were emphasized. As such, Lukács's work stood at the beginning of a trajectory—of which Merleau-Ponty clearly saw his own earlier "Marxist" period works as a terminus—in which conscious human agents, and not "laws of motion" of society,

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were said to make history. Lukács was the founder, against orthodoxy, of a Marxism which no longer attempted to model itself on the natural sciences, and in which human freedom and consciousness had a central role to play.

In *Adventures of the Dialectic* Merleau-Ponty discussed the defeat of this "Western" Marxism at the hands of "orthodox" Leninist theory and Bolshevik practice. He also discussed the failure of later attempts—particularly that of Sartre—to hold together Lukács's dialectic of subjectivity and objectivity: Marxism, he concluded, seems destined always to relapse into a one-sided objectivism, or an equally one-sided subjectivism. Moreover, the repeated failures of twentieth-century Marxism are not merely the outcome of the conditions and history of the Russian Revolution; rather, they must be accounted for in terms of fundamental flaws within the original theory of Marx himself. There is, Merleau-Ponty suggested, a "discordancy between naive realism and dialectical inspiration" in Marx's own thought,[2] which is merely replicated in the later history of Marxism. Thus, if Bolshevism has been a failure there is no sense "in trying Marx all over again."[3] With this, Merleau-Ponty's involvement with Marxism was over. While continuing to hail Marx as a "classic" theorist, he proclaimed a commitment to what he called a "heroic liberalism": a liberalism which accepts from Marxism the existence of class struggle and an awareness of the limits of a politics of abstract principles, a liberalism which recognizes the fundamental ambiguity, contingency and violence of politics.

In Merleau-Ponty's work, then, the very notion of "Western" Marxism is born within the project of demonstrating the need to go beyond all Marxisms. In J. G. Merquior's recent book, written more than three decades after *Adventures of the Dialectic*, a similar intention is at work. If Western Marxism is flawed—and Merquior argues in no uncertain terms that it is—then it would seem that there is no point returning to Marx, or to other Marxisms. Although Merquior's own political agenda remains buried beneath the surface of what appears primarily to be a work of critical exegesis, it turns out that liberalism—though not of Merleau-Ponty's "heroic" variety—is what he too advocates: *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!*

Western Marxism before Merquior

In the period between 1955 and 1986, the term "Western Marxism" came into common usage and its meaning broadened. For Merleau-Ponty, Lukács's Marxism was "Western" in two senses: it was to be

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distinguished from the Eastern European orthodoxy whose locus lay in the Soviet Union, and it sought to return to Hegel and thus to the core of the Western philosophic enterprise. For an array of later scholars and commentators, however, Western Marxism has come to stand for more. Although Lukács still stands as an originary figure, the term now refers to a particular strand of Marxism whose intellectual history extends from the 1920s to at least the early 1970s and, for some commentators, into the present and possibly beyond.

Among recent works, Perry Anderson's dense little essay, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (1976), has been seminal both in constituting the subject matter of Western Marxism and initiating a critique of it.[4] For Anderson, Western Marxism is both a geographical designation—for the movement is centered in Germany, France and Italy—and a particular orientation. The latter emerges above all from the failure of working-class revolution to take place in Western Europe. Western Marxism exudes a profound pessimism and is a Marxism of defeat. It involves a delinking of Marxist theory from mass working-class movements, a concomitant shift of theorizing into academic settings and retreat into what Anderson calls "theoreticism," and a focus, in the light of the failure of orthodox predictions, on superstructural elements: philosophy itself, politics, aesthetics, at the expense of political economy and class struggle. Thus, although a return to Hegel was central to the work of many Western Marxists, it is not the essential hallmark of the movement. For this reason such anti-Hegelian thinkers as Althusser and Della Volpe can also be included within the Western Marxist canon, according to Anderson.

Anderson suggests that the history of Western Marxism begins with the defeat of socialist revolutions in Hungary and Germany after World War I. Lukács and Karl Korsch were, in the early 1920s, the first to attempt to revise orthodox Marxism in the light of these failures. The failure, in the next decade, of Popular Front politics to stem the tide of Nazism gave rise to the second wave of Western Marxism: the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse and others) in Germany, Gramsci in Italy. Finally, the failure of the Left to build a viable politics from Resistance forces after World War II led to a third wave of Western Marxism. This included Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Althusser in France, Della Volpe and Colletti in Italy, and Habermas in Germany.[5] Other commentators have, by and large, agreed with Anderson's roll-call of those who should be called Western Marxists, though they have focused on different themes, concepts, or problematics as giving coherence to the orientation.

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Anderson concluded that by the early 1970s Western Marxism was exhausted. Not only were its major figures either dead or past their most productive periods, but times were changing so as to make Western Marxism less relevant. The continued dynamics of world imperialism remained a pressing agenda for Marxists about which Western Marxism had nothing to say. Furthermore, renewed Left activism from 1968, combined with the first major post-war crisis of the Western economies in the early 1970s, shifted the Marxist agenda back to issues of working-class organization and economics, issues on which Western Marxism had been silent. Yet, Anderson pointed out, although Western Marxism had run its course and had been overly inward-looking, esoteric and pessimistic, it was not to be dismissed as an aberration. Within the confines imposed on it by the tragic failure of European revolutionary movements, Western Marxism still remained true to the revolutionary impulse of Marxism, avoiding a Second International-type slide into reformism. It also achieved "a sophistication greater than that of any previous phase of historical materialism" in those areas where it focused its investigations.[6]

Anderson's verdict on Western Marxism was (at least until Merquior entered the lists with his blistering condemnation) the most definitive. Some years later, in his major scholarly study of Western Marxism, *Marxism and Totality* (1984), Martin Jay gently challenged Anderson. Using the concept of "totality" as a focal point through which to explore Western Marxism, Jay concluded that "it is too early to offer 'a historical balance sheet' of the movement as a whole." To do so is to attempt a conclusive totalization which is not yet appropriate. For many of the rich themes of Western Marxism continue to be explored and developed, at least in the U.S., by the generation of non-dogmatic leftists whom Jay calls "the generation of 1968."[7] Given the continued lack of working-class revolutionary movements in the West, Jay is surely right that it is too soon to conclude that Western Marxism, born of such a lack, has had its day. However, Merquior, as we shall see, does not share such scruples. His polemic denies any value, past, present, or future, to Western Marxism.

Hegel and Modernity

The hero of Merquior's book is Hegel—a Hegel who, in Merquior's rather dubious reading, is the advocate of reason, technological progress, and individual freedom. It has been downhill from the *Philosophy*

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of Right onwards, and the entire history of Western Marxism can, finally, be characterized as nothing more than "an episode in the long history of an old pathology of Western thought: irrationalism" (201). With the possible exception of Gramsci, there is not a figure in the canon of Western Marxism for whom a redeeming word can be said. Moreover, the trouble all started with poor old Marx himself. For Marx vacillated between what Merquior regards as a sensible Hegelian notion of history as progress through technological (thus economic) development on the one hand and, on the other, all sorts of foolish and romantic nonsense about alienation and the evils of technology and the division of labor. It was, of course, the latter nonsense that the Western Marxists took hold of. But it is not clear that Merquior thinks we should attach much value to the more sensible side of Marx either. Merquior's explicit purpose is above all critique. He never advances his own positive agenda, and indeed quite frequently appears to be berating the Western Marxists from an orthodox Marxist standpoint, any stick being equally suitable to flog a dead horse. But even so, if we extract the main implications of his critique, it becomes clear that the proper road from Hegel is one to the defense of advanced liberal capitalism.

Of course, Hegel is also the starting-point for most Western Marxists. Beginning with Lukács, there is a conscious return to Hegelian notions of history as totalization and dialectic as a way of developing a critque of orthodox Marxism. So Merquior is at pains to distinguish "his" Hegel from "theirs." He thus begins his book with a lengthy treatment of Hegel which avoids "the lenses" of Western Marxism. Merquior concedes that there are certain dangerous invitations to "illiberalism" (29) given with Hegel's commitment to an account of history as the unfolding of the Ideal. However, the Hegel whom he claims remains of lasting value is the inventor of the modern notion of "civil society" as a realm of concrete individual interests and freedom (26–29). This Hegel[8] is one for whom the present—the Napoleonic state—is the final instantiation of the individualist impulse which has been central to the Western spirit since early Christianity. It is the modern "bourgeois" state which finally institutionalizes individualism, and which Hegel thus defends.

Moreover, Merquior's Hegel is not just the defender of the "bourgeois-Christian synthesis" in the modern state. He is the defender of modernity *tout court*. For Hegel, unlike the Western Marxists who falsely claim him as an inspiration, really believed that "the process" of history is rational. Hegel's theory of history, Merquior asserts

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(though he never really argues the case), should best be read as legitimizing "a considered acceptance of the spirit of modern society, with its growing division of labour, its increase in individual freedom and its new sense of man's ability to shape history" (31). Thus, we should not seek in Hegel a yardstick to criticize "our own liberal industrial world" as Western Marxists and recent commentators such as Charles Taylor have done. What Hegel gives us of value is a theory of history as "the process" of progress, a theory which essentially legitimizes modern Western society as the end-point of rational development. It is such a theory of "the process" which Merquior accuses Western Marxism of lacking.

Merquior is indeed accurate in saying that Western Marxism lacks such a definitive theory of "the process." However, the fact that Western Marxism problematized the notion of progress, avoiding both orthodox Marxist theories of inevitable social transformation and liberal evolutionism, is perhaps what makes it of continuing relevance—a point to which I will return later.

In his reading of Hegel as the defender of modernity, Merquior eschews using the term "capitalism." Modern society (ours as well as Hegel's) is described as "liberal industrial." This choice of terms points towards the main criticism that Merquior levels at Marx as well as the Western Marxists. Marx, at what Merquior regards as his best, had a clear theory of the process of history as progress. In spite of its manifold faults, classical historical materialism had, in Merquior's view, the merit of being presented as "a causal theory in the strong sense, specifying a sequence of self-evolving modes of production" (48), a theory in which capitalism had to be appreciated as the most advanced mode of production. Thus Marx wrote approvingly of the revolutionary impact of capital, of the "benefits of industrialism and technological progress" (52). But, unfortunately, there was another side to Marx—the one upon which Western Marxism was to draw, of course—in which he romantically opposed himself to "modernity" by erroneously conflating the evils of nineteenth-century capitalism with the necessary characteristics of modern industrial society *per se*.

Even in his late works Marx persisted in objecting to the division of labor, disliking money, rejecting the market economy and the "commodity form." All these positions are brusquely dismissed by Merquior as no more than evidence of Marx's "romantic unwillingness to accept the market economy as an institutional bedrock of the modern age." Like all romantics, Marx was essentially backward-looking. He "nourished feelings of antipathy towards *the nature of the modern econ-*

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omy as such—apart, that is, from any grievances concerning its capitalist social structure" (52–53; emphasis added). The same criticism is repeatedly levelled at the later Western Marxists throughout Merquior's account: in their critiques of commoditization, alienation, technological domination, they all built upon this romantic side of Marx, foolishly neglecting the self-evident requirements of the modern economy (and modern society) "as such." In this objection to Marx is to be found the core of Merquior's criticism of the entire history of Western Marxism.

But for all its centrality to his argument, it is a criticism which is baldly asserted rather than seriously argued. We are asked to take it as unproblematically self-evident that there is such an entity as *"the modern economy as such,"* analytically and even essentially distinguishable from the historical development of capitalism. While such a position of course has a pedigree of a kind descended from Weber, it is not a position that is tenable within a Marxist framework—even one toward which Merquior is somewhat sympathetic. For it involves radically delinking both the sphere of circulation and the social and technical division of labor from the social relations of production. Whatever may be the disagreements between Marxists about the relationships between the political economy and the "superstructural" elements of a society, such a total delinking of the structures *internal* to the political economy destroys the interconnected kernels of both Marxist political economy and historical materialism. For what grounds and links these together in *Capital* is the clear location of the *historical* development of the market, of industrial technology and of the social and technical division of labor, within the historical development of capitalism as a specific mode of exploitation: we cannot analytically distinguish modern industrial society from modern capitalist society without moving into a mode of anti-historical and essentialist analysis that is inimical to any kind of Marxism.

Ironically, it is Marcuse, the Western Marxist whom Merquior hates most of all, whose position he most closely parallels in this respect. For although (apparently wearing his orthodox Marxist hat for the moment) Merquior castigates Marcuse for his departures from economistic Marxism, both of their analyses grant an equivalent autonomy to technological rationality, divorcing its development from the development of capitalism *per se*. The difference is only that the autonomous dynamic of technological reason and its social instantiations which each insists upon is regarded as repressive by Marcuse and as progressive by Merquior. But even outside Marxism there are few

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today who would *unproblematially* accept, as Merquior does, the view that modern liberal industrial society is historically divorced from the emergence of capitalism. On the contrary, the connection between a capitalist, or "free enterprise," economy and the development of individualism and the kind of liberal political order of which Merquior approves is frequently and sometimes persuasively discussed.[9]

Nietzsche, the Villain

If Marx remains, in Merquior's account, a confused fellow who could not make up his mind between extolling the virtues of technological progress and bemoaning its ills, it falls to Nietzsche to be the out-and-out villain of the piece. For it is Nietzsche who stands in diametrical opposition to Hegel. He is not merely a romantic but the originator of "a passionate indictment of modernity compounded by a devastating denunciation of Christianity." Nietzsche is the source of the all-embracing attack on modernity which is summed up in the term *Kulturkritik*. As the originator of *Kulturkritik* Nietzsche is also the destroyer of the Hegelian notion of historical "process." His "sweeping cultural critique" lacks—indeed opposes—just what Merquior most values in Hegel. It lacks "a proper theory of the institutional basis of modern society, and a reasonable account of historical movement, highlighting the birth of modernity" (38).

Nietzsche is today regarded (often of course approvingly) as the point of origin of "post-modernism" or "post-structuralism." With him begins the attack on the "logocentrism" of the West which has as its present culmination the work of Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze, and others. Merquior has settled his scores with post-structuralism in another book, *From Prague to Paris,* published shortly after *Western Marxism*. As may be expected, he is intensely unsympathetic to post-structuralism, condeming it as "the unholy alliance of Nietzsche and formalism"[10]—and also as *Kulturkritik*. In the light of this it is significant that Merquior also traces the ills of Western Marxism above all back to Nietzschean origins. If Western Marxism is no more than another episode in the "pathology" of irrationalism, this is because it "betrays" the "real" Hegelian heritage in Marx. It abandons the theory of history as a rational "process" of which modernity is the end point. While falsely claiming to Hegelianize Marx, it substitutes for Hegel's heritage a Nietzschean *Kulturkritik* and a rejection of historical logos. Indeed what is original in Merquior's analysis of Western Marx-

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ism, what—apart from its uniquely vitriolic tone—makes it distinct from the interpretations of Anderson, Jay, and others is his reading of Western Marxism as a version of *Kulturkritik*.

Through the Lenses of Kulturkritik

The bulk of *Western Marxism* consists of two lengthy survey chapters. One deals with the "foundations" of Western Marxism (from Lukács to Gramsci), the other with the "post-war scene" (from Adorno to Habermas, with a detour into French thought from Sartre to Althusser). With the exception of Gramsci who, although not sufficiently interested in economy, managed to reject the reductionism of orthodox Marxism without succumbing to irrationalist enticements, it is the abandonment of the historical process for the enchantments of *Kulturkritik* that gives Western Marxism its distinctive qualities. For Merquior, Western Marxism is not merely characterized by its theoreticism, or by its concerns with culture rather than economy and class, which others have pointed out. Above all Western Marxism is distinguished by its hostility to science, technology and the division of labor—that is, its hostility to modernity as such; by its romantic fixation on "reification" and alienation; and—because it has also disowned reason in history with its rejection of a theory of historical process—by its profound pessimism.

This broad characterization, emerging out of Merquior's prior discussions of Hegel and Marx, and of Nietzsche, sheds more light on some of the figures he discusses than others. Adorno, of course, fits the mold, and some aspects of the thought of Bloch and Benjamin are well illuminated through Merquior's approach. But it is something of a Procrustean bed into which to force others. Lukács's optimism or Althusser's rationalism, for example, hang out untidily over the edges, although Merquior certainly does his best to stuff them in. However, while certain facets of Western Marxist thought, such as its aestheticism, are well illuminated by reading particular figures through *Kulturkritik* lenses, Merquior's approach also obscures much that is important. The end result is a one-sided caricature in which the serious issues raised by Western Marxism are ignored while its excesses are emphasized.

Via his initial reading of Hegel, Merquior baldly makes the claim that modernity is the end-point of a rational historical process and that it is patently puerile to inveigh against its essential characteristics. His method in these central chapters is then to show us that each figure he

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discusses lacks a theory of the historical process and that, indulging in *Kulturkritik,* each refuses to confront the necessary and indeed desirable elements of modernity: science, technology, the division of labor, the market, etc. The over-all verdict arrived at by this method is that Western Marxism is at best irrelevant and, at worst, dangerous.

However, rather than engaging in a serious debate with the Western Marxists, Merquior unfortunately relies throughout on polemic and vilification. To explain, for example, Lukács's enthusiastic support for the Russian Revolution as the product of "the intensity of his Dostoevskyan craving for brotherhood epiphanies in an apocalyptic framework" (71); to describe the early Frankfurt School as "the knights of critical theory . . . mesmerized by the concept of reification" (112); to describe Marcuse's critique of the concept of technical reason as "a crass epigonic sub-romanticism" (160), is to use tactics which, while witty, add up to no more than derogatory abuse. Merquior constantly subjects us to rhetorical techniques—in the worst sense of the term—attempting to persuade us onto his ground without bothering to consider the actual arguments of those whom he opposes.

Ultimately, of course, such a method is self-defeating. For it is subversive of the canons of rationality to which Merquior tells us he subscribes. And in the era of "post-modern" attacks on Western rationality and the idea of progress, it does a disservice to those of us who are reluctant to abandon the field entirely to current Parisian fashion. For if, as Merquior closes his book by stating, Western Marxism really is no more than an episode of pathological irrationalism, ending in about 1970, it would appear to have given way to simply more of the same. In condemning both Western Marxism and (in *From Prague to Paris*) post-structuralism as irrationalist *Kulturkritik,* Merquior robs us of any criteria to distinguish between them. We are thus left with the unhappy alternatives of his own naive rational-technological progressivism on the one hand and stark post-structuralist irrationalism on the other. Ultimately, Merquior's treatment begs the key questions: whether there is not some value in the Western Marxist skepticism about orthodox Marxism's notion of historical progress, and whether what Merquior calls *Kulturkritik* might not be insightful in exploring the modern condition.

Western Marxism, Post-Structuralism and Rationality

Post-structuralism identifies itself explicitly and militantly as a *rejection* of not only Western rationalism but also any idea of a continuous, let

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alone progressive, history. From the perspective of post-structuralism Western Marxism still appears as a defense of modernity—and correctly so. For what Merquior's reading obscures is that Western Marxism makes its critique of modern society in order to attempt to *salvage* a notion of reason and to explore whether, in the light of the failure of the Marxist revolutionary project in the West, any kind of notion of historical progress remains possible. That many of the Western Marxists are "pessimistic" in their conclusions should not be confused with a celebration of irrationalism. Rather than accusing Western Marxism of lacking a theory of historical process we should credit it with a serious, if inconclusive, investigation as to whether there remain any grounds for such a theory given twentieth-century events. Western Marxism rightly questions exactly what Merquior wants us to take for granted. But it questions in the hope of rescue, rather than in the post-modernist spirit of rejection.

Thus, to consider one of the thinkers to whom Merquior gives particularly short shrift, Sartre's later political writings (the two volumes of his *Critique of Dialectical Reason,* the second of which Merquior does not even mention) are explicitly concerned with the question of reason and progress in history. Like other Western Marxists Sartre argues that "orthodox" Marxism, whose faith in historical progress is grounded in a naturalistic theory of laws of development (what Merquior approvingly calls "a causal theory in the strong sense"), has shown itself to be historically and theoretically bankrupt. But the question then for Sartre is whether we can *still* discover an "intelligibility" to history. If we abandon faith in laws of development that guarantee it ahead of time, is it yet possible to discern development in history? Can we show that out of the multiple actions of individuals and diverse social ensembles there emerges not, *pace* the post-structuralists, discontinuity and random change, but a totalizing process that links them together in coherent ways? Sartre sets out to answer this question affirmatively. History can be shown to be what he calls a process of "totalization without a totalizer," that is, a process of on-going and intelligible synthesis even though such synthesis is not ensured by God or an "objective spirit."

There are, of course, difficulties with Sartre's account. Indeed, these led him to abandon the second volume incomplete.[11] But even so his attempt to reveal the *logic* at work in Stalinism as the totalization of an incomplete revolution must be reckoned a serious effort to address the issue of reason in history, an attempt that should be built upon rather than dismissed. Similarly, for example, Marcuse's search

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for revolutionary agents other than the proletariat raises real questions (even if one does not agree with his answers) concerning whether there exist potential forces for significant social transformation today. The work of Habermas—whom Merquior does grudgingly praise for his "courageous resistance" to post-structuralism (179)—raises important issues concerning the structural and institutional transformations modern society would have to undergo to provide us with a more liberatory world. But for Merquior, Habermas, "while less silly and melodramatic" than Adorno or Marcuse, still finally "sides with *Kulturkritik* rather than with a wholehearted acceptance of cultural modernity" (180), and thus belongs on the scrap-heap.

Underlying Merquior's hostility to all these thinkers is, of course, the claim that we are not today in need of liberation. Unlike Habermas, we should "wholeheartedly" accept cultural modernity. Present-day "liberal industrial" society is the best of all possible worlds. I would submit, along with the Western Marxists and many others, that it is not. But here I enter a terrain which Merquior claims is suspect: the terrain of values. For if modernity is the instantiation of the Western spirit of reason and individualism, the end-point of a long history of progress, then, Merquior tells us, we have no choices. Any attempt at resistance or critique is irrational; it is anti-scientific, even "silly." Values are irrelevant in the face of historical fact.

But the "facts" themselves are under attack today, not merely from those of us who point to the exploitation, oppression and diverse forms of violence that accompany modernity, but from those who would take us into "post-modernity" with a rejection of the very possibility of reason or progress. In the face of the post-modernist challenge, Western Marxism should be respected for its nuanced defense and reworking of reason and progress, not cast in the role of enemy.

NOTES

1. See, for example, *Humanism and Terror,* trans. John O'Neill (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969 [1947]) and *Sense and Non-Sense,* trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia A. Dreyfus (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964 [1948]).
2. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Adventures of the Dialectic,* trans. Joseph Bien (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974 [1955]), 62.
3. *Ibid.*, 91.
4. Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: New Left Books, 1976). Other explicit attempts to evaluate Western Marxism as a

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whole include Russell Jacoby, *Dialectic of Defeat: Contours of Western Marxism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). Much of the same ground is also covered in Dick Howard, *The Marxian Legacy* (London: MacMillan, 1977) and James Miller, *From History to Human Existence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). For references to the literature on individual thinkers and sub-movements within Western Marxism the bibliography in Jay should be consulted.

5. Anderson did not include Habermas among the Western Marxists in *Considerations,* but he criticized himself for the omission and included a discussion of Habermas in a later work. See *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism* (London: Verso, 1983).
6. Anderson, *Considerations,* 94. By 1983 Anderson also conceded that many of the themes and insights of Western Marxism had continued to be developed in fruitful ways in more recent Marxist theory. See *Tracks,* 23.
7. *Marxism and Totality,* 15 and 18.
8. This reading owes a certain debt to Kojève, as Merquior acknowledges. See Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel,* trans. James Nichols (New York: Basic Books, 1962 [1947]).
9. See, for example, Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).
10. J. G. Merquior, *From Prague to Paris: A Critique of Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Thought* (London: Verso, 1986), 199.
11. For an account of Sartre's second volume of the *Critique* and his failure to complete it see Ronald Aronson, *Sartre's Second Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

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David L. Prychitko

MARXISM AND DECENTRALIZED SOCIALISM

COMMUNISM AND DEVELOPMENT
by Robert Bideleux
New York: Methuen, 1985. 315 pp., $39.95 (paper)

MARXISM, SOCIALISM, FREEDOM: TOWARDS A GENERAL DEMOCRATIC THEORY OF LABOUR-MANAGED SYSTEMS
by Radoslav Selucky
New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979. 237 pp., $22.50

UNORTHODOX MARXISM: AN ESSAY ON CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM AND REVOLUTION
by Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel
Boston: South End Press, 1978. 379 pp., $8.50 (paper)

A recent discussion of the progress of perestroika reported that the pro-Gorbachevites "claim they are the real socialists, advocating ways to reverse alienation of the workers and achieve a decent society. They base themselves on the works of 'the young Marx, before the Communist Manifesto and the ideas on political economy,' as one man put it."[1]

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The works under review are among those which advance the notion that there are decentralist alternatives to the Soviet model of Marxist socialism, and that these alternatives are economically feasible. A discussion of them should properly begin with "the young Marx," i.e., most importantly, his Paris Manuscripts, though it is questionable whether the dichotomy of early against late Marx is as sharp as some Gorbachevites might wish.

Marx's Critique of Market Alienation

The worker under capitalism, according to Marx, is thrown into an objectified, alienated world. As the division of labor increases along with the extent of production for the market, the worker, being without land or capital, becomes more dependent upon his labor for mere survival. The worker sells his labor power to capitalists for a money wage: Labor power, therefore, becomes a commodity, an object of purchase and sale in the marketplace. To be sure, the worker's productivity increases as capitalist production becomes more technical and is rendered more efficient within the firm. But the fruit of his labor, the final product, is not for the worker to enjoy—it is the property of the capitalist, who turns it over to the chaos of the market. In search of profit, it is sold to the highest bidder.

As a result, man confronts the object of his labor as something alien. It is exchanged in an anonymous market. Moreover, not only the object but the activity of production itself is alien to man, for it is no longer a creative activity per se. Instead, as Marx says, it is "an activity which is turned against him, independent of him and not belonging to him."[2] Under capitalism, man also becomes alienated from nature, from other men, and, finally, from himself (which is to say, from the historical potential that lies before him).

Marx maintains that alienation is an empirical fact of capitalism, but his critique is not made for the sake of description alone. As Gajo Petrovic recognized, "'self-alienation' is not merely a (descriptive) concept; it is also an appeal, or a call for a revolutionary change of the world."[3]

This revolutionary change is to emerge under communism, which will transcend self-alienation and allow man to "return to himself." Alienation is not eliminated by simply abolishing private property, money, and competition, for these are only *expressions* of alienated labor, not its initial cause: "Though private property appears to be the source, the cause of alienated labor," says Marx, "it is rather the con-

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sequence, just as the gods are *originally* not the cause but the effect of man's intellectual confusion."[4]

Consequently, alienation may appear even in societies that abolished private property, money, and market exchange. (What immediately comes to mind is the War Communism period that followed the Bolshevik Revolution.)[5] As Mihailo Markovic has pointed out, "It does not make an essential difference to the worker whether the usurper is a capitalist or a bureaucrat," for "this is just another form of appropriating the surplus value created by the working class."[6]

Abolishing private property, money, competition—in short, abolishing the market and replacing it with conscious direction of economic activity—is nevertheless a *necessary* condition for de-alienation and emancipation. If alienation is finally to be extinguished under socialism, then the "anarchy of production" that Marx and Engels so often railed at must be replaced by an *ex ante* coordination of economic activity. That is, just as activity within the capitalist firm is consciously unified and planned in advance, so must the activity *between* enterprises. Rivalrous competition and spontaneous economic order must give way to cooperation and human design.

Was Marx a Central Planner?

That Marx calls for a conscious ordering of economic activity is incontestable.[7] He sees unified control in industry becoming an ever greater possibility as the vicissitudes of market competition leave in its wake only monopolies. With only a few competitors, decisions that were once made solely on the basis of market price signals will come under the direct control of the capitalist monopolists. Capitalist concentration of industry will, ironically, reduce the anarchy of production—as will post-capitalist socialism.

But must this *ex ante* socialist planning be *centralized?* Not necessarily, according to some Marxists. This position is held quite strongly by the Praxis group in Yugoslavia (Markovic, Petrovic, Stojanovic and others). In fact, they are convinced that hierarchical central planning is inconsistent with Marx's humanistic vision. This vision, which runs throughout Marx's work,[8] is said to yield a decentralized socialism based upon participatory economic planning and workers' self-management in industry. The evidence for this view of Marx is to be found in his explicit critique of market alienation and of the division of labor.

It is worthwhile to distinguish between Marx's critiques of the divi-

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sion of labor within society and within the firm. The social division of labor is based upon a wide distribution of capital. It unfolds in a spontaneous, undesigned manner, through the rivalrous buying and selling of commodities that makes up the market process. As such, it is inherently complex, emerging from the inevitable clashing of millions of independent plans among competing entrepreneurs and consumers. The division of labor within the firm, on the other hand, remains under the control of a single authority, the capitalist. It is based upon a concentration of capital. Commodities are produced not by any single worker, but by a group of workers subordinated to the capitalist's detailed plan. Marx sees the two differing not only in degree, but also in kind: The social division of labor is an unintended result, externally imposed by the competitive market process; the division of labor within the firm is determined well in advance and externally imposed by the authority of the capitalist. Thus Marx sees "anarchy in the social division of labor and despotism in that of the workshop"[9]—two very different phenomena.

In *State and Revolution* Lenin remarked that, under socialism, "the whole of society will have become one office and one factory," thus putting an end to the anarchy of production. Kautsky made a similar claim in *The Class Struggle*. No doubt this came from their reading of Marx. After all, Marx does argue in *The Poverty of Philosophy* that "if one took as a model the division of labor in a modern workshop, in order to apply it to a whole society, the society best organised for the production of wealth would undoubtedly be that which had a single chief employer, distributing tasks to the different members of the community according to some previously fixed rule."[10] This sounds like a central planning board. Furthermore, in his lengthy disquisition on the division of labor in *Capital,* Marx offers the following remark:

> It is very characteristic that the enthusiastic apologists of the factory system have nothing more damning to urge against general organization of the labour of society, than that it would turn all society into one immense factory.[11]

Many commentators see this as Marx's call for hierarchical central planning. For instance, in *Marxism, Socialism, Freedom* Radoslav Selucky argues that "it follows from Marx's statement [in the *Poverty of Philosophy*] that this arrangement would be only welcome" (13). Selucky then uses the "one immense factory" statement from *Capital* to bolster this argument.

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But these quotations from Marx actually do not clearly support the "one nation, one factory" view of socialist planning. First, it takes little reflection to conclude that Marx is no admirer of the division of labor in the factory. In the *Poverty of Philosophy* he is criticizing Proudhon for actually granting too much to the division of labor; for simply juxtaposing its pros and cons ("He should have shown us the drawbacks of the division of labour in general, of the division of labour as a category"); and for confusing the division of labor within the factory with the social division of labor in general. Marx is simply pointing out that, according to Proudhon's modeling of the division of labor after that of the modern workshop, one would expect to see a "single chief employer" despotically organizing the social division of labor within *capitalist* society as a whole. "But this is by no means the case," argues Marx, for "modern society has no other rule, no other authority for the distribution of labour than free competition."[12]

Nor does Marx's statement in *Capital* seem to be a recommendation that a socialist society be turned into an immense factory. On the contrary, Marx is now criticizing what he considers mere "bourgeois ideology"—an ideology which celebrates the division of labor within the factory and the iron hand of capitalist organization, but at the same time ridicules any notion of a centralized authority which treats the whole of society as a single factory. He is pointing out what he considers to be an inconsistency in bourgeois thought, but this does not entail embracing either side of the antinomy. For *conscious* planning need not necessarily be *centralized*.

Rather than calling for central planning, Marx argues that self-alienation can end only after workers gain conscious control over the coordination process within society and, equally important, after they gain control over the labor process within the enterprise. He can be seen, then, as a proponent of decentralized socialism and workers' self-management.

Marx sees little revolutionary potential for labor unions *per se*, for they are given a false sense of control within despotically organized enterprises, just as citizens are given a false sense of control over the democratic voting process. Man will "return to himself" only after both the anarchy of commodity production and the despotic control of the capitalist are abolished through revolution. Marx thinks this an ever greater possibility as capitalism progresses, for that which supports the social division of labor—the wide distribution of capital—is undermined by monopoly capitalism; and that which supports the division of labor within the enterprise—the concentration of capital—is

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eroded by joint stock companies, banking, and credit. These economic conditions set the stage for the final overthrow of capitalism.

Marx believes that "the life-process of society, which is based on the process of material production, does not strip off its mystical veil until it is treated as production by freely associated men, and is consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan." Here alienation comes to an end, and man becomes free. Marx concludes:

> The freedom in this field cannot consist of anything else but of the fact that socialized man, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power; that they accomplish their task with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most adequate to their human nature and most worthy of it.[13]

Rather than a strict division of labor within enterprises, and a hierarchical organization stemming from the authority of a central planning board, these ideas lend support to autonomous workers' self-management in industry, and participatory democracy in society. In short, Marx may well have been open to decentralized socialism.

A Model of Decentralized Socialism

What would decentralized socialism look like? How would planning and coordination occur?

In a recent issue of *Socialist Review*,[14] Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel make the rare claim that they have provided a "detailed description" of decentralized socialism in their book *Unorthodox Marxism*,[15] which purports to be a "clear vision of what socialism will be like." Do they support this claim adequately?

Albert and Hahnel recognize the totalitarian nature of "centrally planned" economies. They also admit that central planners lack adequate information and motivational incentives to muster a socially efficient allocation of scarce resources. Thus their "radical" alternative. Simply democratizing the central planning process offers nothing for "true" socialism: "Although it would be possible to elect the central planning board to accord with the fullest of known democratic principles," they warn the reader, "to conclude that this would resolve the problem is to miss the point. Self-management does not mean electing some person or agency to make our decisions for us" (267).

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They propose, instead, a "revolutionary councilist view"—democratic, participatory planning by relatively autonomous workers' and consumers' councils which coordinate their activities by an iterative checking procedure. Planning takes place from the "bottom up" rather than the "top down." Furthermore, markets have no place in their model—a conclusion consistent with Marx's call for the abolition of market forms of alienation.

Albert and Hahnel focus on dialogue—something which few economists do. Certainly the neoclassical mainstream, with its exclusive focus on equilibrium market prices, has no concern for dialogical processes: The standard models are completely devoid of dialogue and any notion of interpersonal relationships among market participants. All economic activities are coordinated on the basis of prices alone, prices which, in perfectly competitive conditions, contain all the relevant information necessary for individual optimizing behavior and Pareto-optimality. Albert and Hahnel's concern for reconciling dialogical processes with economic systems is an interesting exercise which warrants careful consideration.

Albert and Hahnel go to great pains to impress upon the reader the interconnectedness of human systems: following the Marxian notion of causality, they maintain that no human event, economic or otherwise, can be reduced to a single cause, or even a finite number of causes. Each event is both a cause and an effect. Everything depends upon everything else. "To abstract from the whole," therefore, "is to ignore important aspects of each act" (139). Because they often abstract from a system's complexity, neoclassical economists consequently view markets as "informational miracles." Empowered with Marxian notions of causation and over-determination, Albert and Hahnel pierce the veil to expose markets as "cybernetic disasters." Time and again they tell us that markets "delete all the information about different groups' activities that would allow those groups to coordinate their activities in a way promoting social well-being" (140). Rather than utilizing information in an efficient way, we learn that markets suppress the flow of information:

> [The market] price leaves us in ignorance concerning what went into a commodity's production, what needs were met or left unsatisfied, and what human characteristics were simultaneously produced. Prices someone will pay for goods we are producing don't let us know what pleasures and character development they will promote. Market institutions hide all this information about the concrete relations that are necessary

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> for morale and empathy, and thereby preclude the development of solidarity based on each unit's concern with the well-being of others (142).

Their critique of the market is perhaps best expressed in a single phrase: "*Markets make it almost impossible to think relationally and historically about one's involvements with other productive processes*" (142; emph. added). How right they are! In a complex economy it is undeniably impossible to know in detail how one's own actions affect all others.

Now participatory planning, planning without a market, will replace imperfect market prices with dialogue between all concerned parties. First, a council must democratically agree (probably by majority vote) upon its own production (or consumption) activity; then it must ensure that its plan fits with the plans of all other relevant councils. Of course, to expect an initial convergence of plans would be fantastic. Perhaps one discovers that the demands of one council exceed the available supplies of another; that a council's activity would limit the character development of another; that the plans agreed to by one group of councils would economically harm another; that technology would be better utilized in one sector of the economy than another, and so on. These possibilities, for Albert and Hahnel, are not *problems* to be faced by decentralized socialism; rather, they demonstrate how socialism is an *information-enhancing procedure*. Thus, confronted with the disjuncture of their original plans, council members would go back to their collective drawing boards with this new information in mind, and sit down for a new round of proposals and debate. Because "there is no reason to suppose that the initial proposals will provide an immediate mesh or economic plan," one can only conceive "the planning procedure as a potentially continuous process" (270, 271).

This iterative procedure of proposing/denying/reproposing requires a hierarchy of democratic bodies. If a disagreement persists between two or more councils, or if, having reached a mutually satisfying agreement, the new plan disrupts the plans of other councils, a vertical structure of councils must be developed to smooth over the conflicts created by horizontal decisionmaking. "Federations would be necessary. Every 'industry' would have regional councils with representatives from all the work-place councils, and national councils made up of representatives from all the regions. Neighborhood councils would federate similarly" (271).

But here, just when we need a clear vision of what socialism will be like, we receive only ambiguity and contradiction.

Decisionmaking can be bumped up the hierarchy of councils only

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so long. If production and consumption are ever to start, someone (or some supreme council) must make a decision which binds all relevant parties. After judiciously weighing the social costs and benefits of various courses of action, the supreme council must decide upon the best course of social action. It must judge the merits of one plan over another. It must force inferior councils to accept a feasible plan. It will thus become, *de facto,* a central planning board. In Albert and Hahnel's words, "forcing mechanisms" will be necessary to guarantee plan convergence.

Moreover, because even the authors don't expect everyone in society to absorb, understand, or take a genuine interest in the plethora of technical and local details which must be discussed in order for the final council to rationally construct a feasible course of action, the relevant producers and consumers must be represented by a council of elected *delegates* (subject to rotation and strictly recallable, of course). This no longer rings the radical bell of meaningful self-management. Instead, one hears the drone of reformist representation.

Only if conflicts of interest do not continuously arise—only if, at some level, groups of councils could reach agreements without the intervention of "forcing mechanisms"—would central planning be unnecessary. But why should we believe this to be a real possibility? A world of scarcity is a world with conflicts of interest.

Moreover, while Albert and Hahnel strongly condemn others for not thinking "relationally," thereby failing to take into account the universal interdependence of all events, their own model goes no further in explaining how every individual's actions affect everyone else. It merely analyzes conflicts between a few councils at a time. To the extent that they remain content with this partial view of the system, their criticism of other analysts loses its force. On the other hand, to the extent that they adopt a mathematical model which accounts for interconnectedness by way of general equilibrium shadow prices (which is, by the way, the goal of the same authors' forthcoming work), their emphasis on genuine dialogue must give way to the standard economist's interest in equilibrium. In this case dialogue must be "forced" into the neoclassical model—not a promising prospect.

If the intricacies of Albert and Hahnel's ideal decentralized system are too complex to be developed in theory, what should we expect in practice? How, for instance, would the actual final arbiter determine the relative importance of the conflicting demands made by the rivalrous councils?

Finally, Albert and Hahnel's model ignores the fact that the market

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is, as Don Lavoie puts it, a "procedure for the discovery and conveyance of *inarticulate* knowledge."[16] If knowledge is significantly tacit, as contemporary philosophers of knowledge argue, then Albert and Hahnel, by abolishing the market, will be left with no means of using the bulk of this knowledge in discovering new and better ways to allocate scarce resources. Subjective valuations of resources cannot be determined by discussion and debate alone; nor can they be imposed by central edict or by votes. A single mind or council of minds will not have all the knowledge necessary to rationally design a complex economy. This is the essence of what has come to be called the "knowledge problem" posed by the Austrian-school economists, the problem Ludwig von Mises described in his classic 1920 essay which ignited the socialist calculation debate within the economics profession.[17]

Contrary to the Albert and Hahnel view of prices, Austrians argue that freely established market prices act as "aids to the mind" under the anarchic organization of capitalist industry. Though imperfect from an ideal standpoint, monetary calculation allows for the practical coordination of a set of intricately connected, complex production processes. Rational economic calculation becomes impossible outside simple face-to-face communities if market-generated prices and thus monetary calculation are abolished.

Albert and Hahnel condemn market institutions for concealing detailed information about the millions of unique events which make up the market process. But they ignore the fact that this complexity arises precisely as the orderly *result* of anarchic exchange. It is simply absurd to condemn market prices for not exposing all the intricate details of interconnected economic activities, when in fact those activities owe their *raison d'être* to market prices, and could not be preserved if anarchic organization were replaced by a unified plan.

Albert and Hahnel's model cannot deliver the goods. They fail to see that the necessary scarcity-indicating valuations, valuations which assist in rational economic calculation, are determined within the social context of individuals pursuing changing courses of action. Valuations emerge in the form of market prices which capture, though imperfectly, the relative scarcities of economic goods to those individuals. Prices become meaningless if they are not determined through rivalrous production and consumption among actually exchanging individuals.

Thus, a system of councils, with no guidance from spontaneously formed prices of consumer and capital goods, cannot rationally calculate the relative scarcities of those goods. No single mind or council of minds possesses the knowledge to think "relationally" about the pres-

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ent, let alone the future. To take even the simplest example: A consumer who declares at a council meeting that she values five pounds of potatoes as much as a gallon of milk, or that she prefers apples to pears, adds nothing to rational economic calculation. Tallying up her requests, along with all others, and comparing them to the current and anticipated supplies gets us no further, even if the plans converge. For valuation takes place at the moment of decision, when she actually goes out to collect her groceries; it is affected by tastes, expectations, fleeting moods, the weather, etc. Some days she may wish to have more potatoes, other days no potatoes at all. Called to justify this unpredictable behavior at the next council meeting, she could do nothing but admit that her previously submitted "valuations" were wrong. In short, there is no reason to believe that, even in the case of the simplest decisions, individuals will be able to think "relationally" about future circumstances.

This problem is compounded when we move from consumer goods allocation to the roundaboutness of the production process itself, and the allocation of capital goods within that process. In this case it is not only a question of matching the demands of consumers with the final supplies of commodities. Instead, the entire capital structure itself must be intertemporally coordinated. Here the dynamic issues of saving, investment, and resource depletion (to name the most obvious) come to the fore.

If it is impossible for people to think relationally in real-world markets, as the authors claim, then will they be able to do so without prices? The standard economist's concern with price alone, it is true, leads to an unrealistic model of the way the world works. Albert and Hahnel's concern for dialogical processes within economic systems provides a critical turn away from the mainstream which those within the Austrian school would do well to follow. To be sure, Mises recognized that "language opens up the way for a person of exchanging thoughts with all those who use it" in such a way that its influence on "thinking and the expression of thought, for social relations, and for all activities of life" are immensely significant.[18] But in particular, spontaneously formed market institutions are *not* the result of atomistic individuals responding to a given array of prices, but the result of individuals already involved in truly dialogical relationships. Trade journals, industry studies, marketing agreements, business lunches, conference calls, higgling and haggling, the interpretation of accounts and so on are all part of the grand conversation we call the market process.

Albert and Hahnel's problem is that they go much too far: their ex-

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clusive focus on conventional dialogue leads them to neglect the more subtle dialogical role of market-generated prices and monetary calculation. They see market prices as *getting in the way* of dialogue rather than being the *consequence* of dialogue. Prices, in reality, allow for a much *greater* degree of diversity and complexity in dialogue.

Albert and Hahnel do not account for the complexities of contemporary economic systems, and by thus excluding the knowledge-generating role of market prices, they build an equally unrealistic model of the way the world *should* work. Jürgen Habermas, who has done some of the most important and interesting work on dialogical processes, admits that the complexity of modern systems would have to be sacrificed if we were to institute a completely democratic, conventionally dialogical model of socialism: "All modern economies are so complex that a complete shift to participatory decision-making processes, that is to say, a democratic restructuring at *every* level, would inevitably do damage to some of the sensitive requirements of contemporary organizations." Hence, Habermas questions whether socialists "should not preserve part of today's complexity within the economic system, limiting discursive formation of the collective will precisely to the decisive and central structures of political power; that is, apart from the labour process as such, to the few but continuously made fundamental decisions which will determine the overall structure of social production and, naturally, of distribution."[19]

Why should a *restricted* dialogue, one which is not allowed the full play to yield market prices, be thought of as the more rational mechanism with which to conduct economic activity? Conversely, isn't a true conversation itself "irrational" in the sense of being somewhat unpredictable? I have in mind Gadamer's point: "We say that we 'conduct' a conversation, but the more fundamental a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. Rather, it is generally more correct to say that we fall into a conversation, or even that we become involved in it." An unplanned order emerges during the course of a free dialogue: "The way in which one word follows another, with the conversation taking its own turnings and reaching its own conclusion, may well be conducted in some way, but the people conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led." Like the anarchic market process in general, "no one knows what will 'come out' in a conversation. Understanding or its failure is like a process which happens to us."[20] This I take to be the essence of dialogue. Rationality is not synonymous with predictability.

To deny the spontaneous outcomes of voluntary dialogue—to abol-

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ish the market institutions of price and monetary calculation—seems to me to deny dialogue's epistemological relevance in a complex social setting.

Merging Marx with Markets

Robert Bideleux offers an alternative Marxist defense of decentralized socialism in *Communism and Development,* an alternative which allegedly solves the knowledge problem.[21] Bideleux argues that the market is indeed a necessary feature of decentralized socialism precisely because it has knowledge-enhancing properties. Radoslav Selucky also expresses this argument in his *Marxism, Socialism, Freedom,* which had much influence on Alec Nove's recent work.[22] Selucky recognizes the Austrian-school theme that "if the market is wholly eliminated and replaced in all its functions by a central plan, there is scarcely a *practical* possibility of rational economic calculation" (48). But combining Marx and the "alienating" market seems puzzling, if not contradictory.

Primarily a book which reappraises various communist development strategies, Bideleux's work advocates a system of decentralized socialism based upon market exchange and village-based development. It provides a wealth of statistical data (which may prove valuable to the specialist in economic development) while seeking to provide a Marxist justification for Bideleux's village-based market socialism.

Bideleux maintains that while Marx could be interpreted as a political centralist, as Lenin had done, this interpretation neglects Marx, the admirer of the Paris Commune, and Marx, the supporter of autonomous village communes. Bideleux, concerned with developing the latter Marx, translates and extensively quotes three drafts of the *Sochineniya* manuscript Marx tried to finish before his death, one which positively discusses the development potential of the village commune in peasant Russia.

We find Marx most candid in the third draft of the manuscript: "All depends on the historical context. . . . Communal property in land offers Russia a natural base for communal appropriation, and its historical context—coexistence with capitalist production—grants it ready-made the material conditions for co-operative labour, organized on a broad scale. . . . Once placed on normal footing in its present form, it can become the *direct point of departure* for the economic system towards which modern society is moving" (Bideleux, 10). From this reading of Marx, Bideleux concludes that "a peasant society" could be

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led "*directly* to a village based communism," without initial heavy industrialization strategies.

The author combines his commune-ism with a defense of market socialism. "In principle," writes Bideleux,

> collective ownership and control of the means of production ought to go hand in hand with some form of "producers' democracy" and a market economy in which prices are allowed to broadly reflect relative costs and scarcities and so enable spontaneous market forces to promote an increasingly efficient use of resources to produce goods and services which consumers really want (176).

Indeed, Bideleux stresses that "village communism must . . . maintain a *market system* and hence a reasonably disciplined and confidence-inspiring *monetary system*" (70).

Yet Bideleux does not attempt to place his pages of Marx quotations within the context of Marx's overall work—a fundamental hermeneutical error. He never attempts to reconcile Marx's supposed market socialism with Marx's critique of market alienation. It is highly dubious to simply assume, as Bideleux does, that the *Sochineniya* manuscript implies a retreat from Marx's earlier, well-known condemnation of the market (10), or to link Marx with the Oskar Lange's defense of commodity production under socialism (70), without making any effort to square this new "late" Marx with the old "late" and "early" ones, let alone with the unified Marx one finds in the work of such interpreters as Walicki; all of these "Marxes" unequivocally condemn market exchange.

Radoslav Selucky, on the other hand, squarely confronts the issue, but from another direction. His *Marxism, Socialism, Freedom* represents a scholarly commitment to Marxist interpretation and revisionism, and promises to be a classic in the ongoing debate over decentralized socialism and the Marxist tradition.

Selucky begins with a question: "Can socialism be democratic in the sense of guaranteeing individual freedom?" He attempts to answer the totalitarian problem of contemporary "centrally planned" economies, and the socialist "knowledge problem" as well. He believes solutions exist only under a decentralized system characterized by social property, labor self-management, and market exchange.

Selucky does not hesitate to link totalitarian socialism to Marx. The author argues that its origins are found in a "theoretical mistake" in Marx's critique of the market, a "cleavage" between his interpretation of the economic and political emancipation of man:

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> While Marx's economic concept of socialism consists of a single social-wide factory based on vertical (hierarchical) relations of superiority and subordination, his political concept of socialism consists of a free association of self-managed work and social communities based on horizontal relations of equality. Whoever accepts in full Marx's first concept has to give up the latter, and vice versa; they are mutually exclusive (xi).

Lenin accepted the first concept, and failed. In a world still characterized by imperfect knowledge and scarcity—characteristics which Selucky sees little hope of transcending—abolishing the market will destroy any hope of achieving equality and freedom. "Here lies the main problem of the Marxist approach: the abolition of the market is, at the same time, the abolition of the economic base for equality and freedom" (21). For he concludes that, without first overthrowing scarcity, "centralism [and thus inequality and tyranny] is an inevitable price which must be paid for the abolition of the market" (34). (Hence the inevitability of central planning in Albert and Hahnel's model.) Selucky maintains that in calling for the abolition of market exchange relations, Marx was nothing less than utopian, for he assumed that the social division of labor and scarcity could be extinguished immediately after the revolution (a point which Bideleux never discusses). Selucky sees this as a "very appealing" humanistic goal for man's distant future, but simply unrealistic for the period following the socialist revolution and, at least, for the early stages of communist development (24).

I don't find the "cleavage" between economic centralism and political decentralism as apparent in Marx's writings as Selucky does. As I have shown above, it is not all that clear that Marx calls for "one immense factory," as Kautsky and Lenin would have us believe. But in the end this may be of largely academic interest, since Selucky agrees that in conditions of economic scarcity a non-market model of workers' self-management must ultimately collapse into a model of central command planning, whether this was Marx's intention or not.

Selucky the economist recognizes the necessity of the market as a knowledge-enhancing institution; ironically, Selucky the socialist also sees the market as the only hope for the economic and political liberation of man. He wants a viable self-managed socialism which does not collapse into command planning. In fact, he builds his model of socialism upon Milton Friedman's discussion of the relationship between economic and political freedom.[23]

Selucky recognizes that economic freedom (the market) is a necessary, though not sufficient condition for political freedom (defined in

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the negative sense as the absence of coercion by other people). He sees that the "*definitive* resolution" of alienation is "unrealistic in political and utopian in economic terms" (148–49). Consequently, a more realistic goal of socialism, in Selucky's view, is to maximize positive freedom—individual self-mastery and a share in the controlling authority—which implies the participation, autonomy, and creativity of the associated producers. A central plan, though it may free man from the blind forces of the market, is itself a source of alienation because the worker produces not for direct consumption, but according to the dictates of the plan. It forces the individual to choose between his interests as a producer and those as a consumer, which, under the incentives that arise under actual attempts at central planning, are contradictory. As Selucky keenly observes:

> The situation is totally absurd: Man works, fulfils the plan targets, gets his wages, but is unable to use a part of his earned income to get what he needs. Owing to the logic of the non-market system, he is forced to behave as a schizophrenic: his material interest as a producer is tied to the plan targets. His interest as a consumer can be spelled out only through effective demand. If, as a producer, he meets the effective demand expressed by himself as a consumer, he would behave against his interest as a producer. If, as a producer, he does not meet the effective demand expressed by himself as a consumer, he would behave against his interest as a consumer and live in permanent frustration. Under the circumstances there is no way out. The market alienation of his labor not only has not been overcome or even lessened but, on the contrary, it has been augmented by another specific alienation created by the non-market system, *the alienation of man from his wages* (39).

Central planning would (if it worked) free man from economic necessity, but it would do so only through coercion by the state. This violation of negative liberty, in turn, blocks the development of the positive political liberties socialism should enhance, because it can only be implemented hierarchically.

Thus the necessity of the market to guarantee political freedom. Meaningful self-management requires the market, as the market allows for true autonomy between enterprises. Which is to say, a decentralized and voluntarily coordinated economic base is necessary for a decentralized and voluntarily coordinated political superstructure.

Rather than state ownership of the means of production, then, Selucky calls for social ownership; rather than command planning, indicative planning will tame the anarchic forces of the market. Social

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ownership means that, though society formally owns the means of production, management is vested in those who participate in production. To quote the 1974 constitution of Yugoslavia, social ownership implies the following: "Nobody has any legal right to appropriate products of commonwork, to manage them, and to dispose of public means of production on the ownership basis." Veljko Rus, a prominent Yugoslav sociologist, points out that this existential notion of a "nobody" is operationalized as a legal entity, the work organization.[24] Responsibility becomes collective, or "anonymous" (to use Rus's term), resting with the work organization, rather than among individual social actors.

The idea of social ownership is vague at best. Who will be responsible for allocating capital goods? How will their values be calculated? What procedures will be implemented to reward the efficient use of resources and punish inefficiency? And who will do the punishing?

Under social ownership, relatively free markets would exist for consumer goods. Yet social ownership can mean that capital goods, though "owned" by "society," are "rented" by the workers' management councils; or it can mean that the state actually allows workers' councils to sell capital goods while paying a depreciation charge to the state. (In the economic sense, this is the difference between a *usus fructus* right and a *right of use*.) Neither Bideleux nor Selucky make this distinction. I can only imagine that they would opt for the former alternative, since this is more consistent with Marxian exploitation theory.[25] If so, however, the only information the market would provide to the owner of capital goods—the state—would consist of consumer preferences as revealed by consumer goods prices. Since market prices would not be spontaneously determined for capital goods, there would be no procedure by which to assess their relative scarcity. The state, working with various councils, would have to allocate capital goods between competing enterprises on an arbitrary basis. How many machines to devote to specific agricultural concerns, and how many to devote to industry? Indeed, how could it even be determined what specific types of capital equipment need to be produced? In a world of scarcity, how will limited resources be allocated among competing means of production? The knowledge problem articulated by Mises in 1920 appears once again, and would endanger the political liberation sought by decentralized socialism.

If we suppose that, instead of *usus fructus*, the *right of use* is granted, so that enterprises buy and sell capital goods in a market setting (as in contemporary Yugoslavia), then for all practical purposes, property

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has become privatized. Judgments concerning the best use of scarce resources become radically decentralized, as each enterprise is free to allocate them to the highest bidder. The primary coordinating vehicle, then, is market exchange. Planning becomes a series of interventions in this dialogical process, attempting to steer the conversation and its results in one direction or another. Here plan and market are not reconciled. On the contrary, each sets off a series of unintended and mutually antagonistic consequences. A market-based, decentralized socialism which allows for the purchase and sale of capital goods among competing organs of self-management (such as the Yugoslav system) is fundamentally a market system with a great degree of state intervention. The difference between capitalism and decentralized socialism becomes, therefore, a difference in degree, not a difference in kind: a question of how far a society is willing to allow for genuinely dialogical relationships and their unplanned results.

Marxism in Crisis?

Those decentralist Marxists with little awareness of the socialist calculation debate which occurred among economists during the thirties and forties (including the Praxis philosophers, and, apparently, Albert and Hahnel) call for the complete elimination of market alienation through the democratic, discursively dialogical development of a unified economic plan. They consider this to be a consistent Marxist position. But they do not offer a persuasive account of knowledge transmission and utilization in a complex economy, and therefore the danger of their model falling into a hierarchical "command" economy is great.

Those with a somewhat better understanding of economics recognize the need for anarchic exchange relationships in order to achieve political liberation (Selucky) or to assist in calculating the economic value of scarce resources (Bideleux, Selucky). This allowance for markets by ostensible Marxists, although at first glance striking, may be understandable given that Marxism also recognizes the state to be an alienating force. Conflicts of interest, if *not* settled under institutions of voluntary discourse, can be "settled" only by a totalitarian state, which Marx vehemently opposed. However, it is not very clear how far market institutions, the unintended outcomes of economic dialogue, can be allowed to operate by the new Marxists. If markets merely allocate consumer goods, Bideleux and Selucky cannot explain

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how the requisite knowledge for rational capital goods production will be transmitted and utilized—certainly the values of capital goods are not simply imputed, as Schumpeter erroneously believed, from the equilibrium prices of consumer goods. This is crucial because in reality the totalitarian consequences of eliminating the market stem from abolishing capital goods markets, not those for consumer goods. On the other hand, if Bideleux, Selucky or any other market socialist grants this point and is willing to allow capital goods markets tempered by indicative planning, then he ends up with a market-based, non-socialist, non-Marxist (albeit interventionist) system.

The problem of unorthodox Marxist economics is one of coming to terms with both market alienation and state alienation, of reconciling market and plan. On those points agreement has become the exception rather than the rule. Rather than a sign of crisis, however, I believe these new debates are a healthy alternative to the monolithic position held by the orthodox Marxists earlier in this century. I will leave it up to the Marxists themselves to decide which position is more consistent with what Marx himself "really meant." The more important issue is what Marxism—as a living body of ideas—means today, given the knowledge we have gained over the past century, and the critical economic scrutiny to which socialism is too rarely subjected.

NOTES

1. Flora Lewis, "Young Marx and Old Lenin," *The New York Times,* September 11, 1988: sec. 4, 31.
2. Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 111–12.
3. Gajo Petrovic, "Alienation" in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought,* ed. Tom Bottomore (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 9–15. This is not an isolated interpretation. Don Lavoie has argued that "Marx's scientific socialism was not merely an excuse for avoiding any examination of socialist society. It was a recommendation of a particular method for the conduct of such an examination—that is, that socialism be described through a systematic critique of capitalism." Don Lavoie, *Rivalry and Central Planning: The Socialist Calculation Debate Reconsidered* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 29. Similarly, Mihailo Markovic states that "Marx's key concepts invariably refer either to structures which *are, but could be abolished,* or to those which *are not yet, but which could be created.*" See his *From Affluence to Praxis: Philosophy and Social Criticism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), 60.
4. Marx, 117.

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5. In addition to Paul Craig Roberts's classic *Alienation and the Soviet Economy: Toward a General Theory of Marxian Alienation, Organizational Principles, and the Soviet Economy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), see Peter J. Boettke, "The Soviet Experiment with Pure Communism," CRITICAL REVIEW 2, no. 4 (Fall 1988), and Don Lavoie, "Political and Economic Illusions of Socialism," CRITICAL REVIEW 1, no. 1 (Winter 1986–87): 1–37.
6. Markovic, 71–72, 132. Moreover, Pedrag Vranicki comes close to Hayek's position on the logic of planning in *The Road to Serfdom* when he states: "Man as producer finds himself again in the alienated position of hired labor if he has been wholly deprived of participation in the management of production and in the distribution of the resultant product under such a system, which consists not only of total state planning but also of the disposal of surplus value by the state. *The only difference in this instance is that capitalist monopoly has been supplanted by the universal monopoly of the state*" ("Socialism and the Problem of Alienation" in Erich Fromm, ed., *Socialist Humanism: An International Symposium* [Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1965], 299–313, emph. added).
7. This is implicit in Marx's radical critique of market alienation and his call for the abolition of private property, money, and commodity production. In volumes one and three of *Capital* Marx calls for production regulated by "freely associated men" according to "a settled plan"; men who "regulate their interchange with nature rationally," bringing it "under their common control." Moreover, in *The Civil War in France* Marx explicitly recognizes the need for a unified plan if the anarchy of capitalist production is to be abolished: "If united co-operative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, thus taking it under their own control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of Capitalist production—what else, gentlemen, would it be but Communism, 'possible' Communism?" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works,* vol. 2 [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969], 224).
8. Many have divided Marx into an "early," philosophic Marx (The Paris Manuscripts), and a later, "mature" Marx (the Marx beginning with *The German Ideology*): the early Marx is said to be humanistic, focusing primarily upon alienation, while the later abandons humanism for materialism, philosophy for economics. This division is somewhat suspect. The theme of alienation runs throughout the entire corpus. It simply takes on new labels such as abstract labor, reification, and commodity fetishism. See, for instance, Markovic. For a classic account of the unity of Marx's work, see Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968).
9. Karl Marx, *Capital,* vol. I (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Co., 1906), ch. XIV, sec. 4, 385–94.
10. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978), 125.

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11. Marx, *Capital,* vol. I, 391.
12. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy,* 122, 125.
13. Marx, *Capital,* vol. I, ch. I, sec. 4, 92; vol. III, ch. 40, sec. 3, 954.
14. Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, "Socialist Economics," *Socialist Review* 17, no. 6 (November/December 1987): 87–104.
15. Their other book, *Unorthodox Marxism* and *Marxism and Socialist Theory* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), adds little, if anything, to their original decentralized socialist model.
16. Don Lavoie, "The Market as a Procedure for the Discovery and Conveyance of Inarticulate Knowledge," *Comparative Economic Studies* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1986), emph. added. See also his *National Economic Planning: What is Left?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Company), esp. ch. 3.
17. Ludwig von Mises, "Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth" in F. A. Hayek, ed., *Collectivist Economic Planning: Critical Studies on the Possibilities of Socialism* (Clifton, N.J.: Augustus M. Kelley, 1975), 87–130. These ideas are further developed in Mises's *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1981). The Austrian contribution has grown tremendously since Mises's original writings. See, for example, Hayek's essays in *Collectivist Economic Planning* and *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948); T. J. B. Hoff, *Economic Calculation in the Socialist Society* (London: William Hodge and Co., 1949); Israel Kirzner, "Economic Planning and the Knowledge Problem," *Cato Journal* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1984); Don Lavoie, *Rivalry and Central Planning: The Socialist Calculation Debate Reconsidered* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Lavoie, *National Economic Planning: What is Left?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1985); Lavoie, "The Market as a Procedure for Discovery and Conveyance of Inarticulate Knowledge," *Comparative Economic Studies* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1986); Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); Karen I. Vaughn, "Economic Calculation under Socialism: The Austrian Contribution," *Economic Inquiry* 18 (October 1980); Friedrich von Wieser, *Social Economics* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967).
18. Ludwig von Mises, *Nation, State, and Economy: Contributions to the Politics and History of Our Time,* trans. Leland Yeager (New York: New York University Press, 1983), 13.
19. See Peter Dews, ed., *Autonomy and Solidarity* (London: Verso, 1986), 45, 67.
20. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 345. For the libertarian consequences of Gadamer's hermeneutics in general, see Tom G. Palmer, "Gadamer's Hermeneutics and Social Theory," CRITICAL REVIEW 1, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 91–108.
21. See his review of Don Lavoie's *Rivalry and Central Planning* in *Economic Journal* (June 1986): 564–67.

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22. See Alec Nove, *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* (Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1983).
23. Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
24. See Veljko Rus, "Private and Public Ownership in Yugoslavia," *Scandinavian Journal of Management Studies* (May 1986).
25. Vanek points to the *usus fructus* right as a fundamental characteristic of any market-based decentralized socialist system. See Jaroslav Vanek, *The Participatory Economy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 10.

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Peter J. Boettke

THE SOVIET EXPERIMENT WITH PURE COMMUNISM*

Following the October Revolution of 1917 the Bolsheviks embarked upon a series of initiatives in order to bring about a socialist economic order. Traditional accounts of these events—"War Communism" and the New Economic Policy—are deficient in two respects. First, they do not consider the policy implications of early twentieth-century Marxism. Second, they do not appreciate the economic coordination problems such policies would, and did, encounter. As a result, the standard account of early Soviet socialism is distorted. This paper attempts to rectify these deficiencies by discussing the Bolshevisks' own assessments of their purposes and exploring the consequences of their policies in the period 1918–1921.

In 1957, forty years after the Russian Revolution, Michael Polanyi summarized the state of Soviet studies by pointing out that despite, or because of the fact that "volume upon volume of excellent scholarship [was] rapidly accumulating on the history of the Russian Revolution . . . The Revolution [was] about to be quietly enshrined under a pyramid of monographs."[1] This condition continues to persist even after seventy years of reflection upon one of the most fateful events in political-economic history. Despite heroic efforts by Paul Craig Roberts[2] and Laszlo Szamuely[3] to lift the Revolution from underneath the debris of wood pulp, confusion still permeates historical discussion

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of the *meaning* of the Soviet experience with communism.[4] "We have forgotten," as Polanyi wrote, "what the Russian Revolution was about: that it set out to establish a money-less industrial system, free from the chaotic and sordid automatism of the market and directed instead scientifically by one single comprehensive plan."[5]

The grand debate over the Soviet experience from 1918 to 1921 revolves around whether the Bolsheviks followed policies that were ideological in origin or were forced upon them by the necessity of civil war. If Bolshevik economics was ideological, then Marxian socialism must confront the failure of its utopia to achieve results that are even humane, let alone superior to capitalism. If it was spawned by emergency, then the Soviet experience from 1918 to 1921 does not lend any lesson for the economic assessment of socialism. (Some recent authors wish to argue that the policies now known as "War Communism" were produced by both ideology and emergency, and as a result they fundamentally misunderstand the meaning of the Soviet experience with socialism.)[6] In order to evaluate these opposing interpretations, let me first lay out points of agreement and conflict among those interpreters of the Soviet experience with socialism who have established the two poles of the grand debate.

Points of Agreement

Concerning the time period from 1917 to 1921 there really is no dispute over the chronology of events or the economic conditions as they existed after three years of Bolshevik rule. (The famous disputes over Soviet economic statistics do not refer to this time period.) In particular, there exists no controversy whatsoever regarding the economic condition the Russian people found themselves in after only three years of Soviet rule. William Chamberlin, for example, stated that the Russian economy of 1921 was "one of the greatest and most overwhelming failures in history."[7] "Never in all history," H. G. Wells declared, "has there been so great a debacle before."[8] The industrial collapse can be represented by the following statistical table.

By 1921 all areas of economic output fell far below pre-war levels.[9] Industrial life and the cities, in particular, suffered a serious setback during this time as is evidenced in population figures. "By 1920, the number of city dwellers had fallen from 19 percent of the population in 1917 to 15 percent. Moscow lost half its population, Petrograd two-thirds."[10] In 1921 the Soviet Union, as Stephen Cohen has pointed out, lay "in ruins, its national income one-third of the 1913 level, industrial production a fifth (output in some branches being virtually zero), its transportation system shattered, and agricultural production so meager that a majority of the population barely subsisted and millions of others failed even that."[11]

There is no dispute over these facts. But what the facts mean is another story. While for Polanyi or Roberts these facts depict the failure of Soviet so-

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Table 1: Russian Industrial Output

	1913	*1921*
Gross output of all industry (index)	100.00	31.00
Large-scale industry (index)	100.00	21.00
Coal (million tons)	29.00	9.00
Oil (million tons)	9.20	3.80
Electricity (million Kwhs)	2039.00	520.00
Pig Iron (million tons)	4.20	0.10
Steel (million tons)	4.30	0.20
Bricks (million)	2.10	0.01
Sugar (million tons)	1.30	0.05
Railway tonnage carried (millions)	132.40	39.40
Agricultural production (index)	100.00	60.00
Imports ("1913" roubles)	1374.00	208.00
Exports ("1913" roubles)	1520.00	20.00

Source: Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984 [1969]), 68.

cialism, in the eyes of Maurice Dobb, E. H. Carr or Cohen the same facts represent the cost of civil war. The debate over the Soviet experience with socialism from 1918 to 1921 is one of intellectual history and political economy, not economic history. It is fundamentally a debate over which theoretical framework provides the best background with which to interpret the facts.

The Standard Historiography

Despite an apparent dichotomy in the ethical assessment of socialism, most scholars agree with the following rough narrative of events surrounding the origins of the Soviet system. In October of 1917 (November on the Western calendar) the Bolsheviks assumed power because the provisional government was no longer able to rule. Due to the civil war and foreign intervention, the Bolsheviks were forced to engage in emergency policies (later referred to as "War Communism") from June 1918 to April 1921. From 1921 to 1928, after the detour necessitated by war, the Bolsheviks returned to the proper economic policies of the victorious proletariat in an economically backward country (the "New Economic Policy"). In 1928, due to threat of military intervention and a growing economic crisis, the Stalinist regime began its "revolution from above." Policies of collectivization and industrialization were followed as the Soviet Union established the first advanced centrally planned economy. Economic historians as diverse in their appreciation of the moral ideal of socialism as Alec Nove and the late G. Warren Nutter have endorsed this view.[12]

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The standard interpretation is reiterated even by some of the most important proponents of Marxian social theory. Tom Bottomore, for example, in the pages of this very journal wrote that "it is a considerable exaggeration to argue . . . that the period of 'War Communism' in the USSR reflected a deliberate policy to abolish the market and the price system, rather than being in large an unavoidable practical response to the conditions produced by the war, the civil war and foreign intervention."[13] Bottomore defends his position by relying upon the "more balanced view" of Alec Nove.

Economists and social theorists who stress the emergency interpretation of war communism rely considerably upon the research of Maurice Dobb, E. H. Carr, and Alec Nove. In particular, it is Dobb and Carr who turned the scholarly literature away from the once standard view that war communism represented an attempt to implement the Marxian project of communism to the now prevalent emergency interpretation.

Maurice Dobb

Maurice Dobb argues that while there was some ideological justification for the policies of 1918–1921, notions of establishing an immediate socialist economic order were "no more than flights of leftist fancy." We must consider the policies of war communism within the context in which they were introduced, Dobb argues. If we remember that these centralization policies fall between the more decentralized periods of the first eight months of Bolshevik rule and the New Economic Policy (NEP), then war communism "emerges clearly as an empirical creation, not as the a priori product of theory: as an improvisation in face of economic scarcity and military urgency in conditions of exhausting civil war."[15]

The Bolsheviks had to increase centralized direction and the use of coercive measures in order to obtain and manage the resources necessary for the war effort. Lenin's regime originally tried to obtain the necessary resources for the civil war by following inflationary policies, according to Dobb. By issuing new currency the Bolsheviks were temporarily able to procure command over the necessary resources. Inflation "acts as a forced levy or tax upon the community, forcing other people to go without, in order that the government as consumer may command a larger share of the available resources."[16] In keeping with socialist principles, though, this tax was levied upon the "moneyed class, who were extensively expropriated by the fall in the value of money, and the peasantry," not the industrial worker, who was the backbone of the revolution, since it became the practice for workers to receive an increasingly large part of their wages in kind.[17]

But these inflationary policies so devalued the currency that it was impossible for the Bolsheviks to procure enough grain from the peasants. While the issuance of new roubles only increased 119% in 1918, 1919 and 1920 saw increases of 300% and 400% respectively. By October 1920 "the purchasing

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power of the rouble was no more than 1 per cent of what it had been in October 1917."[18] But Dobb argues that this was all in the name of raising funds for the war effort, and had nothing to do with the Marxian desire to eliminate the monetary economy and substitute for it a comprehensive central plan.[19]

Since the Soviet government could no longer obtain resources through the normal process of market exchange, even with the aid of the printing press, it became necessary to "obtain these resources only by measures of coercion, and by centralized control and distribution of supplies." Peasants were required to forfeit any surplus beyond "essential needs of subsistence and seed corn" to the Commissariat of Supplies for allocation among the army and industrial workers. The centralization of the "collection and distribution of supplies was the keystone of the system."[20]

These policies of compulsory requisitioning and centralized economic control could only have been intended as expedient measures, Dobb argues, because they threatened the alliance between the peasantry and the industrial working class which was the basis of the revolution. The Kronstadt rebellion of March 1921 brought home this point with urgency.[21] The three-year reign of war communism had left the economy in ruins and threatened the Bolsheviks' ability to maintain political power. The decision to abandon the policies of war communism in April 1921 is seen by Dobb, however, as a "reversion to the road which was being travelled during the early months, before the onset of the civil war." "NEP," Dobb argues, "is the normal economic policy of the proletariat after the revolution."[22]

Dobb points out that his historical interpretation of war communism and NEP directly contrasts with the predominant Western view in the 1940s that war communism "was a product of an attempt to realise an ideal Communism, which, coming into inevitable conflict with realities, had to be scrapped in favour of a retreat in the direction of Capitalism, as represented by the New Economic Policy."[23] In a twist of scholarly fashion, Dobb's interpretation conquered the mainstream within a matter of years.

E. H. Carr

The famous historian of the Soviet Union, E. H. Carr, reiterated Dobb's interpretation of the war emergency nature of war communism, and is probably more responsible than anyone else for promoting the "war communism as expedient" point of view. The Bolsheviks found themselves in a theoretical and practical paradox, Carr argues. They rose to political power smoothly because of the economic backwardness of Russia; opposition came solely from the remnants of feudalism and from elements of underdeveloped capitalism. This backwardness, however, also made the task of socialist construction that much more difficult. The Bolsheviks wished to construct a socialist economic order without the advanced political (bourgeois democratic) or economic (capitalistic) development that Marxian theory had treated as essential for social

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change. The situation dictated slow and cautious going. The revolutionary cadre, according to Carr, knew it was necessary in theory and in practice to complete the bourgeois revolution before moving forward to the socialist revolution.

The outbreak of civil war in the summer of 1918, though, no longer afforded the Bolesheviks the luxury of slow and cautious policies. It "removed all hesitations by driving the regime forward willy-nilly at break-neck speed along the socialist road."[24] But Carr argues that the policies of war communism were "artificial and unstable," similar to the period known as "war socialism" in Germany.[25] "It was the product of a special emergency and lacked a sufficiently solid social and economic basis to ensure its full survival (even though some of its legacies were likely to remain) when the emergency was over."[26]

War communism consisted of two major policy objectives: (1) centralization of economic decision-making and concentration of industry; and (2) the substitution of a "natural" economy for the market economy. Carr argues that the objective of centralization and concentration can be clearly traced to the first period of the revolution. "Lenin had long ago insisted," Carr points out, "that socialism was the logical next step forward from state capitalism, and that forms of organization inherent in the one were equally indispensable for the other." "Here war communism," Carr continues, "was building on a foundation of what had gone before, and many of its achievements stood the test; only in their detailed application, and in the extended scope given to them were its policies afterwards subject to criticism and reversal."[27]

Policies intended to eliminate market relations, however, are not seen as products of theory by Carr. "The second element of war communism, the substitution of a 'natural' for a 'market' economy, had no such foundations." According to Carr, this policy objective, far from following the original path of the victorious proletariat, was the exact opposite. The attempt to substitute "production for direct use rather than for a hypothetical market . . . was a direct abandonment" of the policies of the first eight months, an "unprepared plunge into the unknown."[28]

But at other places in his narrative, Carr seems to suggest that the policies of war communism were not just emergency measures, but also seemed to be "an authentic advance into socialist order."[29] At one point he even refers to war communism as "the attempt to implant socialism by shock tactics."[30] And in another instance, Carr states that "the real issue in the period of war communism was not the nationalization of industry, . . . but the attempt of the state to administer industry on socialist lines."[31] "But the civil war," he is always quick to add, "dwarfed every other issue."[32]

Forced requisitioning was introduced because the "needs of the Red Army and the urban population could not be met in a devastated, mutilated and disorganized country by anything short of the total surplus of agricultural population."[33] War emergency, in the final analysis, not adherence to any socialist principles, dictated policy objectives.

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The crisis situation demonstrated the need to militarize the economy. Small-scale peasant agriculture was inconsistent with the objective of feeding the industrial workers. Large-scale, collective farming was necessary. Arguments in favor of "collective cultivation" are described by Carr as irrefutable "from the standpoint of theoretical socialism or of practical efficiency."[34] Unfortunately, collective farming was not implemented; only grain requisitioning occurred. The mistake committed during war communism, with regard to agriculture, was treating the food shortage as a problem of "collection and distribution" and "not of production."[35]

Industry also needed to be mobilized for the war effort. All major industry had to be transformed into "a supply organization for the Red Army." Industrial policy became "an item of military strategy" where "every decision was dictated by emergency and taken without regard to long-term prospects and principles." The civil war drove home the necessity, according to Carr, for industry to come under "centralized control, direction, and planning."[36] Mobilization of labor was necessary to insure that "every man and every machine" was allocated in the "interests of military victory over the 'white' armies." Labor policy "became a matter of recruiting workers for the war effort and of sending them where they were most urgently required."[37]

Carr argues that declarations of anti-market principles and theoretical references to overcoming the "anarchy of production" by such leading theoreticians as Bukharin or Kritsman were "ex post facto justifications of something which had not been expected but which it had not been possible to prevent."[38] Carr even ascribes war expediency to passages that seem to suggest the socialist aspirations of the decision-makers. A passage from the party program at the Eighth Party Congress in March 1919, for example, states that the "maximum utilization" of the labor force for the purpose of the "planned development of the national economy" must be the "immediate task of the economic policy of the Soviet power." The program further states that the "socialist method of production" can only be made possible by such mobilization efforts.[39] But Carr argues that these passages demonstrate merely the key function of the trade unions in the civil war emergency.[40] Furthermore, he claims that "the argument for the permanent and unlimited conscription of labor by the state, like the contemporary argument for the abolition of money, reads like an attempt to provide theoretical justification for a harsh necessity which it had been impossible to avoid."[41]

So while the exigencies of war communism, which demanded securing resources for the Red army and the urban population, could be described by Carr at one point as "a foretaste of the future communist society" where "methods of exchange" were substituted for by "the principles of taking from each according to his capacity and giving to each according to his need," Carr opts to interpret the policy of forced requisitioning as being "rendered imperative by the civil war" and justifies it "on grounds of military necessity."[42] It is clear that war communism was brought on by military emergency, Carr argues, because such "hand-to-mouth policies" could only be tolerated so

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long as the war lasted. Grain requisitioning, in particular, "whose raison d'être lay in the continuous and inexorable need to meet today's emergency," could not last beyond the emergency situation. The peasants' loyalty to the Bolshevik regime and "reluctant submission to the requisitions" was based on the "fear of a 'white' restoration," and once that fear passed, continued adherence to "oppressive exactions" produced peasant resentment and unrest. This culminated in peasant uprisings beginning in 1920 and continuing through the spring of 1921.[43]

The financial burden of the civil war and industrialization, moreover, called for the nationalization of the banks, and the subsequent devaluing of the currency. "The printing of notes," Carr argues, "remained the sole serious available source of funds to meet current public expenditure and to make advances to industry." So although the financial policies of war communism produced the "virtual elimination of money from the economy," it would be quite mistaken to view this result as the product of any anti-market intention. The destruction of the rouble, according to Carr, was "in no sense the product either of doctrine or of deliberate design."[44] The collapse of the currency had originally "been treated by every reponsible Soviet leader as an unmixed evil against which all possible remedies should be invoked." It was only after no remedy could be found that Soviet leaders began to make a virtue out of the elimination of money, and "the view became popular that the destruction of the currency had been a deliberate act of policy."[45]

The crisis atmosphere of March 1921 led to the substitution of the New Economic Policy for the "more extreme policies of war communism." Carr acknowledges that Lenin and the other Bolshevik leaders gave mixed accounts of the significance of the decision to change course, but claims that it was "unanimously accepted as a welcome and necessary relief."[46] This contention simply ignores the subsequent debate over NEP within the Bolshevik cadre.[47] Carr, however, finds it convenient to view NEP as an uncontroversial move away from the pragmatic, emergency-induced but problem-plagued policies of war communism. The policies of grain requisitioning, mobilization of labor, centralization of economic decision-making, and the destruction of the currency that were followed from 1918 to 1921 are seen by Carr as predominantly the result of emergency circumstances, not adherence to Marxian principles. "NEP was a retracing of steps from a regrettable, though no doubt enforced, disgression and a return to the safe path which was being followed before June 1918."[48]

While pointing out that traces of both the emergency interpretation and the ideological interpretation can be found in Lenin's writings in the post-war communist era, Carr relies upon Lenin's description of NEP "as a resumption of the true line laid down by him in the spring of 1918 and interrupted only by the civil war emergency."[49] It was military concerns, not economic theory, that dictated the policies of war communism. NEP was the path back to the road of economic development on the way to socialism.

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Stephen Cohen

The Dobb-Carr interpretation receives perhaps its strongest support from the pen of political historian Stephen Cohen. Cohen, the biographer of Nikolai Bukharin (the economic architect of both war communism and NEP), has defended war communism as an emergency measure in all his writings. Intimately connected to Cohen's defense of war communism as an expedient is his commitment to NEP as a model of decentralized socialism.

The policies of war communism, Cohen argues, "originated not in the party's ideology, but in response to the perilous military situation that suddenly confronted the Bolsheviks with the outbreak of civil war in the summer of 1918." These policies were "born and took shape in the crucible of military expediency and the Bolsheviks' desperate efforts to survive as the government of Soviet Russia."[50]

It is indeed ironic that the biographer of Bukharin would hold such a position. Bukharin himself was very explicit in his understanding of war communism and the meaning of NEP. "We conceived War Communism," Bukharin admits, "as the universal, so to say 'normal' form of the economic policy of the victorious proletariat and not as being related to the war, that is, conforming to a definite stage of the civil war."[51] Bukharin understood NEP to be an admission of, and a retreat from, the failure of war communism. It was "not only a strategic retreat, but the solution to a large social, organizational problem." The Bolsheviks had tried to take on the organization of the entire economy, and by 1922 Bukharin readily admitted that "from the viewpoint of economic rationality this was madness."[52]

A rethinking of the principles of socialism was called for on the part of Bukharin and other Bolsheviks. As Bukharin put it, "the transition to the new economic policy represented the collapse of our illusions."[53] Socialism, in its Marxian sense, had been tried and had failed. The search began for a "feasible socialism." The search continues today. But we cannot hide from the historical lesson, and its theoretical significance: the search for "socialism with a human face" may well be inconsistent with the socialist dream of overcoming the "anarchy of production."[54] Perhaps Bukharin understood this. Perhaps he even understood the nature of the problem and its significance better than all but a few since him have.

Criticism of the Standard Account

The standard account is deficient for two reasons. First, economic historians and political economists have failed to take seriously the policy prescriptions of early twentieth-century European and Russian Marxism.[55] Leading economic historians, such as Alexander Gerschenkron, argue that little or nothing in the Soviet experience needs to be explained or understood in terms

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of Marxism. Gerschenkron summarizes his position by arguing that "the economic order (or disorder) as was developed in Soviet Russia was created not in obedience to any theoretical tenets, but as a pragmatic response to the exigencies of the practice with power mechanics of the dictatorship well in mind. . . . Hardly anything in the momentous story of Soviet economic policies needs, or suffers, explanation in terms of its derivation from Marx's economic theories."[56] Alec Nove, similarly, argues with regard to the early policies of the Bolsheviks that Marxian ideology was used only as an ex post rationalization for policies introduced as practical responses to emergency situations.[57] I contend that the standard account of historians, like Gerschenkron or Nove, misunderstands the policy prescriptions suggested by Marxian political economy and underestimates the ideological commitment of the "old" Bolshevik cadre.[58]

While Marx did not wish to write "recipes for the cookshops of the future" there is no doubt about the broad outline of Marx's project. His project entailed the rationalization of politics and economics. Rationalization of the economy required the substitution of a "settled plan," which achieved *ex ante* coordination, for the "anarchy of the market": the substitution of production for direct use for production for exchange. As Marx argued in *Capital*,

> The life-process of society, which is based on the process of material production, does not strip off its mystical veil until it is treated as production by freely associated men, and is consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan.[59]

Furthermore, consider the following position taken by the young Marx in the Paris manuscripts:

> The positive transcendence of private property as the appropriation of human life, is therefore the positive transcendence of all estrangement—that is to say, the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his human, i.e., social, existence.[60]

The abolition of private property in the means of production and the substitution of a settled plan for the market has the consequence of rationalizing economic life and transcending man's alienated social existence. This is Marx's "economic" project.

Marx's political project, on the other hand, required the establishment of "classless" politics. Marx's political project was one of radical democracy, one which included universal suffrage and ensured full participation. Since to Marx the state was an instrument of class conflict, the disappearance of class

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meant the disappearance of the state and political power. But this did not mean the disappearance of social or "classless" politics.[61]

The Marxian rationalization project demanded a reconciliation of the conflict between the public and the private spheres of life. Marx's vision required the broadening of the public sphere to all areas of human existence.[62] As Don Lavoie has argued,

> Karl Marx conceived of central planning as an attempt to resolve this inherent contradiction between the private and public spheres of society. As in any genuinely radical perspective, his particular diagnosis of the problem is inextricably bound up with his utopia, his notion of the cure. Marx saw the problem as being located in the competitive private sphere, the market system, where separate, divided, or "alienated" interests contend with one another for resources. He argued that, so long as democratic institutions tried to merge themselves with this competitive sphere, they would invariably succumb to it. The solution, then, was to eradicate competitive market relations and to replace them with a broadening of the democratically based public sphere to encompass all of social life. . . . Social problems would henceforth be resolved not by meekly interfering with a competitive market order but by taking over the whole process of social production from beginning to end.[63]

This task of eradicating market relations and "taking over the whole process of social production from beginning to end" constitutes the economic policy followed by the Bolsheviks from 1918 to 1921. War communism represents the conscious and deliberate attempt to realize Marx's utopia. As Alexander Rüstow argued, "There can be no doubt that Lenin acted as a Marxist during this seizure of power and viewed his mission as one of carrying out the Marxist program under his regime."[64]

The second reason standard accounts fail is that they do not account for the economic coordination problems the Bolsheviks faced in implementing their policies. The theoretical debate over the feasibility of economic calculation under socialism (which first took place among German-speaking economists and sociologists during the 1920s and later among the technical economists in English-speaking countries during the 1930s and 1940s) seems to be irrelevant to the standard economic historian.[65] The typical attitude appears to be that while the theoretical debate might be interesting in itself, it has nothing to add to our analysis of the practice of socialism. This kind of theory-practice split suggests an unhealthy state—either implying that theory has gone off in an esoteric direction and become irrelevant for understanding practical problems, or that economic historians are failing to use theoretical developments to aid them in interpreting reality. While both historical research on the Soviet experience and theoretical discussion about possible socialist worlds continues to

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accumulate, there does not appear to be a healthy cross-fertilization. As a result both the historical interpretation of the Soviet economy and the theoretical discussion of socialist economics seem to misunderstand the significance of the historical lesson of the Soviet system.

But as F. A. Hayek has argued, "Even the most careful study of the Russian facts cannot lead very far if it is not guided by a clear conception of what the problem is; i.e., if it is not undertaken by a person who, before he embarks on the investigation of the special problems of Russia, has arrived at a clear idea of the fundamental task that economic planning involves."[66] Socialism, in its original intent, faces the problem of substituting for the "blind forces of the market" a conscious and deliberate plan that can maintain advanced material standards of living and promote the flourishing of human potential. The Russian experience provides important insights into the feasibility of that quest.

The Alternative Account

Before Dobb and Carr, most historians and political economists understood the failure of war communism to be a direct demonstration of problems of the Marxian project. Economists such as K. Leites,[67] Arthur Shadwell,[68] Leo Pasvolsky,[69] and Boris Brutzkus[70] all understood the Russian experience as an attempt to realize Marx's utopia. This interpretation of events, however, was buried under what became the authoritative account of Dobb and Carr. The original account, though, received strong support in the hands of Michael Polanyi and Paul Craig Roberts.

Polanyi argued that the Soviet experience confirms Mises's original contention that socialism, in its original Marxian sense, is technically impossible. "The only full-scale attempt to [direct all resources of an industrial system from one center] was the one undertaken in Soviet Russia during the last six or eight months of 1920; and the results were disastrous."[71] Mises was proven right.

The program of Marxian central planning died in March 1921 with the introduction of NEP, but the ideology of socialism did not. The Soviet economy, Polanyi argues, was turned into a military state-capitalist system. "The Five-Year Plans with all their sound and fury are but the parading of a dummy dressed up in the likeness of the original purpose of socialism."[72] We have forgotten what the Revolution was all about when we view it otherwise.

Roberts, following on Polanyi, demonstrates that war communism was not conceived as a set of emergency measures by the Bolshevik leaders at the time. Rather, it was an outright attempt to abolish market relations. He points out that in the standard account, such as that of Dobbs, Lenin is quoted only after the establishment of NEP. In addition, while several accounts allow for some ideological influence, they blend ideology and emergency in such a way that ideology quickly falls into the background, and the conditions of the time become the motive force behind Soviet economic policy.[73]

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In order to combat the emergency interpretation Roberts turns to evidence from Marx and the "early" Lenin. He demonstrates that Lenin understood that in Marx's critique of capitalism there existed a positive vision of socialism. The Marxian theory of alienation and its relation to commodity production play a crucial role in understanding the motivation behind the attempt to abolish all market relations during war communism. Lenin, et al., sought to abolish the anarchy of capitalist production and substitute for it a comprehensive planning system. For in an economy where market forces were allowed to continue to operate, alienation would persist, and the Marxian dream would be unfilfilled.

The utter collapse that occurred due to the attempt to implement Marxian socialism forced Lenin to put an end to ideological aspirations, at least for the time being, in order to avoid losing control of the government. He chose to maintain political power at the expense of strict adherence to ideological principles.[74] "Lenin thought," argues Roberts, "that the reintroduction of market exchange was necessary to retain power"; he "understood the practical need to sacrifice doctrine to power rather than the other way around." Thus, "it is clear that the program of eliminating commodity production was abandoned not because it was a wartime measure unsuited to peacetime but because it had caused economic disruption and dissatisfaction that were threats to the political power of the Bolsheviks."[75]

Roberts concludes by issuing a challenge to those who interpret war communism as a set of expedient measures:

> Those who maintain that the policies of war communism were temporary measures to cope with war and inflation rather than an effort to establish a socialist organization should explain why Lenin repeatedly described the policies as efforts to establish socialism. If they were wartime policies, why should Lenin not have said so? If in fact the measures were meant to be temporary and were a response to war and inflation, Lenin's admission that he and the R.C.P.(B.) had made mistakes in their efforts to introduce socialism was not only needless and erroneous but also a fabrication.[76]

Evidence from the Old Bolsheviks

Lenin argued that the imperialist World War I had ripened the conditions for the revolution. Politically, the war had intensified the exploitation of the working class. Economically, the necessities of war planning had created a greater concentration of capital and had brought production under the conscious control of society. Lenin did not intend to abolish war planning but to transform it into a model of socialist organization. As he wrote in December 1916,

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> The war has reaffirmed clearly enough and in a very practical way . . . that modern capitalist society, particularly in the advanced capitalist countries, has fully matured for the transition to socialism. If, for instance, Germany can direct the economic life of 66 million people from a single, central institution . . . then the same can be done, in the interests of nine-tenths of the population, by the non-propertied masses if their struggle is directed by the class-conscious workers. . . . All propaganda for socialism must be refashioned from abstract and general to concrete and directly practical; expropriate the banks and, relying on the masses, carry out in their interests the very same thing the W.U.M.B.A. [i.e., the Weapons and Ammunition Supply Department] is carrying out in Germany.[77]

With elimination of private ownership of the means of production, and political power passing directly to the proletariat, Lenin believed that "these very conditions are a pledge of success for society's transformation that will do away with the exploitation of man by man and ensure the well-being of everyone."[78] Lenin argued that it was an utter mistake to suggest, because of some preconceived notion that conditions were not ripe, that the working class should support the bourgeois government, or that the proletariat should renounce its leading role in convincing the people of the urgency of taking practical steps toward the establishment of socialism.[79]

"We [Bolsheviks]," Lenin wrote, "put the issue of socialism not as a jump, but as a practical way out of the present debacle."[80] The steps Lenin advocated were nationalization of land, state control over banks and the establishment of a single state bank, control over the big capitalist syndicates and a progressive income tax. "Economically," Lenin argued, "these measures are timely; technically, they can be carried out immediately; politically they are likely to receive the support of the overwhelming majority of the peasants, who have everything to gain by these reforms."[81]

Only by implementing socialist policies could Russia avert catastrophe. This theme of Lenin's was reiterated in "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It."[82] What was needed, according to Lenin, was for the government, a real revolutionary government, to take steps toward introducing the socialization of production; only by such steps would Russia escape disaster. The chief and principal measure for averting catastrophe was to increase control of the production and distribution of goods, i.e., to rationalize the economic process. Lenin's program of control, which he argued could be established by a workers' state "in the first weeks of its existence," consisted of (1) nationalization of all banks and the creation of a central bank, (2) nationalization of syndicates, (3) abolition of commercial secrecy, (4) compulsory syndication, and (5) compulsory organization of the population. The creation of a central bank, in particular, was essential to Lenin, because the principal nerve center of modern economic life was the bank. One cannot regulate economic

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life without taking over the banks—control over the banks allowed the unification of accountancy.[83]

"We cannot be revolutionary democrats in the twentieth century and in a capitalist country," Lenin wrote, "if we fear to advance toward socialism." There "can be no advance except towards socialism."[84] Capitalism in Russia had become monopoly capitalism due to the imperialist war. Monopoly capitalism develops into state monopoly capitalism. Yet the state is nothing but the organization of the ruling class. If you substitute a revolutionary democratic state for a capitalist state, Lenin argued, "you will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state-monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step, and more than one step, toward socialism!" "For socialism," Lenin continued, "is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly which is made to serve the interests of the whole people."[85]

These themes are perhaps best articulated in Lenin's two most important works, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* and *The State and Revolution*.[86] *Imperialism* set out to explain how the world economic system had changed, and how the war was the inevitable outcome of this change. *State and Revolution* concerned itself with the nature of the state, its use in the revolution and subsequent dictatorship of the proletariat, and its inevitable "withering away" in the post-revolutionary world. The unifying theme in both works, from an economic perspective, is the necessity of control mechanisms for rationalizing social production.

The increasing concentration of capital in the epoch of finance capital had the advantage of bringing economic life under conscious control. The chaotic process of free competition had been overcome, Lenin argued. "Capitalism in its imperialist stage," he wrote, "leads directly to the most comprehensive socialisation of production; it, so to speak drags the capitalists, against their will and consciousness, into some sort of new social order, a transitional one from free competition to complete socialisation."[87]

The era of finance capital had laid the necessary groundwork for complete socialization. The interlocking of business and banking had transformed the world economy, shifting the social relations of production away from capitalism. As Lenin argued,

> When a big enterprise assumes gigantic proportions, and, on the basis of an exact computation of mass data, organizes according to plan the supply of primary raw materials to the extent of two-thirds, or three-fourths, of all that is necessary for tens of millions of people; when the raw materials are transported in a systematic and organized manner to the most suitable places of production, sometime situated hundreds or thousands of miles from each other; when a single centre directs all the consecutive stages of processing the material right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles; when these products are

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> distributed according to a single plan among tens and hundreds of millions of consumers . . . then it becomes evident that we have socialisation of production and not mere 'interlocking'.[88]

In *State and Revolution* Lenin repeated that the epoch of finance capital and the imperialist war had transformed capitalism into monopoly capitalism, providing the necessary prerequisites for transforming the social relations of production. "The proximity of such capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the proximity, facility, feasibility and urgency of socialist revolution," Lenin wrote.[89] The "mechanism of social management" necessary for social transformation was easily at hand, and demonstrated in such state-capitalist monopoly business organizations as the postal service. Lenin argued that once the workers overthrew the bourgeoisie they would inherit a "splendidly-equipped mechanism" that could easily be run by the united workers. This presented the proletariat with a "concrete, practical task which [could] immediately be fulfilled." "To organize the whole economy," Lenin wrote, "on the lines of the postal service so that the technicians, foremen and accountants, as well as all officials, shall receive salaries no higher than 'a workman's wage', all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat—that is our immediate aim. This is the state and this is the economic foundation we need."[90]

Or as Lenin put the matter later in the text,

> Given these economic preconditions, it is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalists and the bureaucrats to proceed immediately, overnight, to replace them in the control over production and distribution, in the work of keeping account of labour and products, by the armed workers, by the whole of the armed proletariat. . . . Accounting and control—that is mainly what is needed for 'smooth working', for the proper functioning, of the first phase of communist society.[91]

With the political and economic task of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and bringing social life under rational control in mind, Lenin broke off from completing *State and Revolution*. The events of the fall of 1917 had transformed Lenin's activity from theorizing about revolution to revolutionary praxis. As Lenin put it on November 30, 1917, "It is more pleasant and useful to go through the 'experience of the revolution' than to write about it."[92]

Overnight the new revolutionary government sought to implement its program by decree. Leon Trotsky, for example, described Lenin's first appearance before the Congress after taking power with the following narrative: "Lenin, gripping the edges of the reading-stand, let little winking eyes travel over the crowd as he stood there waiting, apparently oblivious to the long-rolling ovation, which lasted several minutes. When it finished, he said

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simply, 'We shall now proceed to construct the socialist order'."[93] Having wrested political control from the provisional government the Bolsheviks were now "in a position to carry out the great economic revolution to which the political revolution was only a prelude, introduce socialism forthwith and transform the whole order of Society."[94]

The economic transformation of Russian society consisted of implementing five major principles of social organization: (1) Elimination of private property in land and the means of production, and the maximum extension of State ownership. This required that the working class take control of the banks, railways, shipping, mining, large-scale industry, foreign trade, etc. (2) The forced allocation and mobilization of labor. Militarization of labor was necessary in order to allocate labor resources, just like other resources, in the construction of socialism. (3) Centralized management of production and distribution of resources, deemed necessary for rationalizing the economic process. (4) The introduction of class and socialist principles of distribution. (5) The abolition of commodity and money relations and the substitution of a "natural economy" for the market economy. The elimination of the monetary economy and commodity production were deemed necessary for the "defetishization" of economic life and the transcendence of man's alienated social existence.[95]

Taken in combination, these policies constituted the economic program of war communism, but at the time it was known simply as communism. As Victor Serge reports in his *Memoirs of a Revolutionary, 1901–1941*, "The social system in these years was later called 'War Communism.' At the time it was called simply 'Communism,' and any one who, like myself, went so far as to consider it purely temporary was looked upon with disdain."[96] This system attempted to substitute a unified plan of economic life, i.e., rational social relations of production, for the chaotic and exploitive relations of production that existed under capitalism.

Through a series of decrees, resolutions and party platforms, the Bolsheviks set about implementing the socialist project. By December 1917 the Supreme Economic Council was established and the banks had been nationalized. In January 1918, a declaration of the rights of working and exploited people was issued, abolishing the exploitation of man by man. The decree, however, also embodied a call for a universal labor duty. Labor conscription was introduced to ensure socialist victory in eliminating the parasitic strata of society and in rationally organizing the economy. By July 1918, the Soviet Constitution described labor as an obligation of all citizens and declared that whoever does not work shall not eat. And throughout 1919 labor conscription, i.e., militarization, continued to extend to all categories of labor until it was declared by the State Council on Defense that leaving one's job would be considered desertion.[97]

This militarization plan was extended not only in production but in distribution. Throughout 1918 and 1919 collective exchanges were established, and the trade unions were employed to assure the central distribution of food-

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stuffs. Trotsky, for example, in a decree of February 17, 1918 called upon all local soviets, railway committees and patrols to fight unorganized trading. The punishment for illegal trading of food was either confiscation of all foodstuffs or immediate death.[98]

In addition to the above-mentioned policies, the Bolsheviks issued many other decrees in order to initiate their economic program. Inheritance, for example, was abolished in May 1918, and in June 1918 large-scale industry was nationalized. The party program of the Eighth Party Congress, adopted in March 1919, called for increased centralization and for the abolition of money. And as late as November 1920 (*after* the civil war), the Supreme Economic Council nationalized all industry (even small-scale enterprises). Only the Kronstadt Rebellion of March 1921 would steer the Bolsheviks off this track of outright socialist construction.[99]

In his pamphlet, *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, Lenin argued that the problem confronting the Bolsheviks was that of organizing social administration. The decisive means of solving this problem was implementing "the strictest and country-wide accounting and control of production and distribution of goods." The successful implementation of accounting and control alongside the amalgamation of all banks into a single state bank would transform the banks into "nodal points of public accounting under socialism" and allow the Soviets to organize "the population into a single cooperative society under proletariat management."[100] The possibility of socialism required, according to Lenin, the subordination of the desires of the many to the unity of the plan. The rhetoric of workers' control and workers' democracy meant something entirely different from the model of decentralized socialism that is promulgated today. To Lenin, as to most Marxists at that time, workers' control was a method by which central planning could be accomplished and not a decentralized alternative to it. As Silvana Malle points out, "in Lenin's model of power, workers' control would not evolve in any decentralized form, but, on the contrary, would facilitate the flow of information to the centre and the correct implementation of central guidelines."[101]

Centralized planning and control were the essential elements of Leninist socialism. "It must be said," Lenin wrote, "that large-scale machine industry—which is precisely the material source, the productive source, the foundation of socialism—calls for absolute and strict unity of will. . . . The technical, economic and historical necessity of this is obvious and all those who have thought about socialism have always regarded it as one of the conditions of socialism." And how can such strict unity of will be guaranteed? Lenin asked rhetorically. "By thousands subordinating their will to the will of one."[102]

This theme of strict unity of the plan was echoed throughout various speeches and writings, and not just Lenin's. Trotsky, for example, during a speech to the Central Executive Committee on February 14, 1917, repeated the necessity of rationalizing the economic life of Russia through strict conformity to the plan. "Only a systematic organization of production," he said, "that is, one based on a universal plan—only a rational and economical distri-

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bution of all products can save the country. And that means socialism."[103] This project entailed the abolition of private ownership and the replacement of production for exchange by production for direct use. The chaotic process of market exchange and production must not merely be tampered with, but abolished. "Socialist organization of production," Trotsky declared in 1920, "begins with the liquidation of the market. . . . Production shall be geared to society's needs by means of a unified economic plan."[104]

The ubiquitous nature of monetary calculation under capitalist methods of production was to be replaced by the introduction of strict accounting and control. The economic transformation demanded the abolition of the "alienated ability of mankind," i.e., money, and the substitution of moneyless accounting for monetary calculation. Yu Larin, who was commissioned by Lenin to study the operation of the German war economy and ways to implement that model in Russia, argued fervently for the elimination of all market exchange and production. Larin, at the Party Congress in March 1918, argued that a moneyless system of accounting should be pursued posthaste. The nationalization of banks provided the framework to eliminate hand-to-hand currency and to transform the financial institutions of Russia into, as Lenin put it, "nodal points of public accounting." Under the new economic organization of society a circulating medium was rapidly becoming unnecessary. "Money as a circulating medium," Larin declared, "can already be got rid of to a considerable degree."[105] By May of 1918 the Party declared that all state enterprises hand over circulating media to the People's Bank, and in August 1918 the Supreme Economic Council instructed all managers of industry that settlements of deliveries and receipts of commodities should consist of book entries; in no circumstance should money be used in transactions. And Osinskii, who was the manager of the State Bank and the first chairman of the Supreme Economic Council, described the Bolshevik monetary policy in 1920 as having as "its main aim [the creation of] normal conditions of exchange without money between parts of the uniform and mostly socialized national economy."[106]

The Bolshevik program was best articulated in the Program of the Communist Party of Russia adopted at the Eighth Party Congress in March 1919, and in the popular exposition of that program, *The ABC of Communism,* by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky.[107] Bukharin gave a detailed presentation of the economic organization of communist society in his chapter "Communism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." He argued that "the basis of communist society must be the social ownership of the means of production and exchange." Under these circumstances "society will be transformed into a huge working organization for cooperative production." The anarchy of production will cease as rationality is imposed upon the economic life process. "In such a social order, production will be organized."

> No longer will one enterprise compete with another; the factories, workshops, mines, and other productive institutions will all be subdivi-

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> sions, as it were, of one vast people's workshop, which will embrace the entire national economy of production. It is obvious that so comprehensive an organisation presupposes a general plan of production. If all the factories and workshops together with the whole of agricultural production are combined to form an immense cooperative enterprise, it is obvious that everything must be precisely calculated. We must *know in advance* how much labour to assign to the various branches of industry; what products are required and how much of each it is necessary to produce; how and where machines must be provided. These and similar details must be thought out beforehand, with approximate accuracy at least; and the work must be guided in conformity with our calculations. This is how the organisation of communist production will be effected.[108]

The planning process was to be entrusted to "various kinds of bookkeeping officies and statistical bureaux." Accounts would be kept (day-to-day) of production and its needs. All decisions for the allocation and distribution of resources necessary for social production would be orchestrated by the planning bureaus. "Just as in an orchestra all the performers watch the conductor's baton and act accordingly," Bukharin wrote, "so here all will consult the statistical reports and will direct their work accordingly."[109]

By achieving ex ante coordination of economic activity through the substitution of production for direct use for production for exchange, Bukharin understood that, organizationally, the need for money would disappear. "Money," he simply asserted, "would no longer be required" under these circumstances. The rationalization of economic life under communism would eliminate the waste of capitalist production and lead to increased productivity. This burst of productivity would free individuals from the "chains imposed upon them by nature." The utopian promise of this project was that "concurrently with the disappearance of man's tyranny over man, the tyranny of nature over man will likewise vanish. Men and women will for the first time be able to lead a life worthy of thinking beings instead of a life worthy of brute beasts."[110]

Only the scientific organization of production under the direction of a unified plan constructed by the dictatorship of the proletariat could put an end to the capitalist anarchy of production and eliminate the tyranny of man over man. With the breakdown of commodity production and its replacement by the "socio-natural system of economic relations, the corresponding ideological categories also burst, and once this is so, the theory of the economic process is confronted with the need for a transition to natural economic thinking, i.e., to the consideration of both society and its parts as systems of fundamental elements in their natural form."[111] Social relations would no longer be veiled by the commodity fetishism of the monetary exchange system.

This project of rationalization and emancipation is spelled out in the party

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program adopted at the Eighth Congress. In the realm of economic affairs this amounted to expropriating the expropriators, increasing the productive forces of society by eliminating the contradictions of capitalism, mobilizing labor, organizing the trade unions, educating the workers, and basically, securing "the maximum solidarisation of the whole economic apparatus."[112] It was to accomplish this goal that the Bolsheviks seized the banks and merged them into a single State bank. The bank, thus, "became an instrument of the workers' power and a lever to promote economic transformation." The bank would become an apparatus of unified bookkeeping. "In proportion as the organization of a purposive social economy is achieved, this will lead to the disappearance of banks, and to their conversion into the central book-keeping establishment of communist society." The immediate elimination of money was not yet possible, but the party was moving in that direction. "Upon the basis of the nationalisation of banking, the Russian Communist Party endeavours to promote a series of measures favouring a moneyless system of account keeping, and paving the way for the abolition of money."[113]

The Bolsheviks did not just accept this program in the heat of civil war as many historians assert. The civil war no doubt affected the way the program was implemented, but the program itself was clearly ideological in origin. It emerged out of the conscious attempt to achieve Marx's utopia. Even after the civil war had ended the Bolsheviks embarked upon continued efforts to rationalize the economy. For example, the "Outstanding Resolutions on Economic Reconstruction" (adopted by the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in April 1920) argued that "the basic condition of economic recovery of the country is the undeviating carrying out of a *unified economic plan*."[114] And in November 1920, V. Milyutin, then Assistant President of the Supreme Economic Council, announced the decree of the Council to nationalize even small industrial enterprises and bring them under conscious control.[115] Only the insurgency of the sailors at Kronstadt convinced the Bolsheviks to reconsider their policy.

State Capitalism and NEP

Those writers who support the emergency interpretation of war communism rely upon Lenin's late description of NEP as a return to his 1918 position. But is this really the case? In his defense of the introduction of NEP, *The Tax in Kind (The Significance of the New Policy and Its Conditions),*[116] Lenin argued that NEP was a return to his 1918 position that state capitalism was the transitional form of social organization between capitalism and socialism. But we must keep in mind Lenin's theory of the state and his theory of social relations of production under imperialism.

In *The Tax in Kind,* Lenin reprints much of the argument contained in his 1918 pamphlet, *Left-Wing Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality,* which was a broadside against Bukharin and other left-wing Bolsheviks on the Brest

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Peace and the issue of "state capitalism." In the 1918 polemic Lenin argued that history had witnessed an unusual event. The Russian people had successfully introduced the proper political basis for communism with the dictatorship of the proletariat and the organization of the soviets. But Russia was not fully developed economically. Germany, on the other hand, Lenin argued, was backward politically but advanced economically. The immediate task of the Russian people was to model their economy after the German war planning machine. They were to "spare no effort in copying it and not shrink from adopting dictatorial methods to hasten the copying of it."[117]

The German model, Lenin argued, was "the last word" in modern large-scale capitalism, incorporating advanced engineering and planned organization. But the system was subordinated to a "Junker-bourgeois imperialism." If the system could be made to serve the interest of the proletariat, then socialism was not only possible, but immediate. "Cross out, the words in italics [Junker-bourgeois imperialism], and in place of the militarist, Junker, bourgeois, imperialist state put also a state, but of a different social type, of a different class content—a Soviet state, that is, a proletariat state, and you will have the sum total of the conditions necessary for socialism."[118] Thus, despite accounts that claim that Lenin did not have a model of socialist organization because Marxism was confined to a critique of capitalism, it seems that there was little doubt in Lenin's mind what socialism entailed. And it had nothing to do with the reintroduction of market methods of production, as under NEP.

The characterization of the years before the introduction of NEP as a transition period did not refer to a period of market-based "socialism," but instead to the first phase of communism, which would last a generation or so—until the people had become so acculturated that the door would swing open for the advancement to full communism. This was explained by both Lenin and Bukharin in their theoretical works prior to 1921. The market was to be abolished and replaced by a unified plan which would achieve *ex ante* coordination of production and distribution. War communism was the deliberate attempt to achieve this outcome. But as Lenin wrote in 1921, this method of economic organization proved to be a mistake. "We made the mistake," Lenin admits, "of deciding to go over directly to communist production and distribution."[119] Always the master of political double-speak, however, Lenin is able to turn this admission into an excuse for why the decision was forced upon them. It is his double-speak that caught up commentators like Dobb and Carr.

Still, Lenin understood the problems the Bolsheviks faced in trying to implement socialism. He went so far as to admit in a secret letter of February 19, 1921, written to G. M. Krzhizhanovsky, a member of the State Planning Commission, that "the greatest danger is that the work of planning the state economy may be bureacratised. This is a great one. Milyutin does not see it. . . . A complete, integrated, real plan for us at present = 'a bureacratic utopia'. . . . Don't chase it."[120]

Lenin did not "deviate" from Marxist doctrine in his attempt to abolish market relations. The social ills that accompanied war communism were con-

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sequences of precisely Lenin's faithfulness to Marx. The Marxist project of economic rationalization could not (and cannot) solve the fundamental problem of how to utilize the knowledge in society "which is not given to anyone in its totality."[121]

Lenin's deviation was NEP. The interventionist policies of NEP were an outright denial of Marx's organizational theory. Lenin not only allowed prices and profits to persist, he abandoned the cardinal goal of socialism—the substitution of a settled plan for the anarchy of the market. Even under the most extreme policies of Stalinism, monetary calculation (though highly interfered with) would serve as the basis of Soviet "planning." It was *after* the abandonment of "war" communism that Marxism was reduced to a mere mobilizing ideology of the new ruling class.

While very few modern advocates of socialism would argue for comprehensive central planning, they hold fast to the Marxist critique of the anarchy of the market. But, as Don Lavoie has argued, "the modification from comprehensive planning, which seeks to completely replace market competition as the coordinating process of the economy, to noncomprehensive planning, which seeks to reconcile planning with market institutions, is hardly an alteration of analysis. It is the toppling of the basic pillar of Marxist analysis." Lavoie concludes that "it is by no means evidence that the Marxist critique of the market order which modern planners still implicitly employ, can stand up once it is admitted that markets are necessary and that planning is to consist merely of interference in this unplannable system."[122]

NOTES

1. Michael Polanyi, "The Foolishness of History: November, 1917–November, 1957," *Encounter* IX, no. 5 (April 1957): 33.
2. Paul Craig Roberts, *Alienation and the Soviet Economy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971).
3. Laszlo Szamuely, *First Models of the Socialist Economic Systems* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1974).
4. This is not a point of mere antiquarian interest, but plagues commentators today when they try to understand the meaning or assess the possibility of perestroika. In this essay, however, I will limit my discussion to the three-year period when Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, et al., attempted to implement their socialist project, leaving aside current Soviet policy. For a discussion of how a proper historical understanding is fundamental to understanding the current reform movement see Paul Craig Roberts, "The Soviet Economy: A Hopeless Cause?," *Reason* (July 1988): 57, where he argues that:

> The Soviet story is one of the interaction of speculative excess or utopian aspirations with refractory reality. But scholars cannot see this as long as they believe that Soviet central planning originated

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not in an effort to eliminate the market but in a decision to squeeze agriculture in order to rapidly industrialize.

Unless commentators understand the "grand tale" of the Soviet experience with communism they will be paralyzed in their attempt to understand the meaning of the Gorbachev phenomenon.

5. Polanyi, 36.
6. E.g. Thomas Remmington, *Building Socialism in Bolshevik Russia: Ideology and Industrial Organization, 1917–1921* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984) and Silvana Malle, *The Economic Organization of War Communism, 1918–1921* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
7. William Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution, 1917–1921*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987[1935]), vol. 2, 105.
8. H.G. Wells, *Russia in the Shadows* (New York: George H. Doran, 1921), 137.
9. This economic collapse was also depicted in such literature as Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* and Ayn Rand's *We the Living*. As Alain Besançon has pointed out, those scholars who approach Soviet society through the study of literature, travel or emigré reports "find that they cannot recognize what the economists describe" ("Anatomy of a Spectre," *Survey* 25, no. 4 (Autumn 1980): 143.
10. Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 211.
11. Stephen Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980[1971]), 123.
12. See Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984[1969]), 46–187, and G. Warren Nutter, *The Growth of Industrial Production in the Soviet Union* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 3–10.
13. Tom Bottomore, "Is Rivalry Rational?," CRITICAL REVIEW 1, no. 1 (Winter 1986–7): 45.
14. Maurice Dobb, *Soviet Economic Development Since 1917* (New York: International Publishers, 1948), 122.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, 101.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, 100.
19. Though it is not my purpose here to outline a Marxian theory of alienation and exploitation, it is necessary to realize that the decision-making cadre of the Soviet government were revolutionary Marxists who sought to rid Russian society of the evils of capitalism. The Marxian theory of alienation is intimately connected to commodity production, exchange, and, in particular, the monetary economy. Alienation to Marx was an objective condition co-existent with commodity production, i.e., the sepa-

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ration of production from use. It is *not* a psychological or subjective condition felt by frustrated man. The transcendence of alienation means to Marx the transcendence of market relations. Viewing Marx as an organizational theorist enables the student of Marx to see a tremendous unity in Marx's life work that is denied by those who wish to split Marx into a young Marx and a mature Marx. The young Marx, just like the mature Marx, was concerned with transcending the organizational form of alienation, i.e., the commodity production of capitalist social relations. As Marx argued himself in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Press, 1977), 78–79: "Just as we have derived the concept of private property from the concept of estranged, alienated labor by analysis, so we can develop every category of political economy with the help of these two factors; and we shall find again in each category, e.g., trade, competition, capital, money, only a particular and developed expression of these first elements." See also Marx's discussion in the *Manuscripts* of money as the "alienated ability of mankind" (127–32). On Marx's theory of alienation and central planning see Roberts; Roberts and Matthew Stephenson, *Marx's Theory of Exchange, Alienation and Crisis* (New York: Praeger, 1983[1973]); David Reese, *Alienation, Exchange and Economic Calculation,* unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Va., 1980 (revised MS, 1985); and Don Lavoie, *Rivalry and Central Planning* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 28–47.

20. Dobb, 102–3.
21. For an excellent discussion of these events see Paul Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1974).
22. Dobb, 123. However, see Richard Sakwa, "The Commune State in Moscow in 1918," *Slavic Review* (Fall/Winter 1987): 431. Sakwa argues that

> In the chaotic conditions of late 1917, however, the development of direct democracy and decentralization in both political and economic spheres, was not so much a policy implemented by the Bolshevik party as one that emerged largely regardless of its wishes and out of circumstances. The institutions of the dictatorship of the proletariat were only consolidated by June 1918. The practical implementation of commune ideas before then has given rise to a highly idealized if barely credible vision of a golden age of Bolshevism that came to end in spring 1918.

Also notice the use of the term "New Economic Policy"; if it did constitute the policy that was followed directly after the revolution, and represents the "normal economic policy of the proletariat," then why refer to it as "new"?

23. Dobb, 120.
24. E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution,* 3 vols. (New York: Norton, 1980[1952]), vol. II, 270.

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25. Ironically, many other commentators point out the same connection between war communism and war socialism as evidencing the theoretical nature of war communism as an experiment with Marxian central planning. See Szamuely; Vladimir Treml, "Interaction of Economic Thought and Economic Policy in the Soviet Union," *History of Political Economy* 1, No. 1 (Spring 1969): 187–216. For a discussion of the German ideas of planning that had a direct influence upon the Bolsheviks see Judith Merkle, *Management and Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 172–207; Walter Rathenau, *In Days to Come* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1921), 63–128; Nicholas Balabkins, "*Der Zukunftsstaat:* Carl Ballod's vision of a leisure-oriented socialism," *History of Political Economy* 10, no. 2, (Summer 1978): 213–32. Also see Mises's discussion of war socialism in *Nation, State and Economy,* trans. Leland B. Yeager (New York: New York University Press, 1983[1919]), 141–47.
26. Carr, 271.
27. *Ibid.*, 273.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*, 207.
30. *Ibid.*, 162.
31. *Ibid.*, 175.
32. *Ibid.*, 157.
33. *Ibid.*, 151.
34. *Ibid.*, 157.
35. *Ibid.*, 172.
36. Carr, 173. Carr may have a point here, in that policies tend to take on a life of their own after they are instituted, especially when survival of the party is at stake. As Robert Higgs has demonstrated within the American context, institutions that are initiated to conduct policy within a crisis situation tend to outlive the crisis and become counter-productive to economic prosperity. See Higgs, *Crisis and Leviathan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Despite these unintended results, the original plans and purposes of the actors who initiated the policies should not be discounted too heavily. And, as will be discussed later, the Bolsheviks themselves saw a connection between models of war planning and positive socialist construction.
37. Carr, 198.
38. *Ibid.*, 197. But see Carr's discussion of the beginnings of planning on 360ff., which implies that both ideology and emergency played a role. Carr is particularly confusing in this part of his discussion. He argues that planning was not possible until 1920 because of the civil war. The institutions of planning, i.e., the Supreme Economic Council, the State Bank, nationalization of industry etc., were established in 1918 and 1919, but they took on an ad hoc character because of civil war. Real centralized planning, therefore, could not be instituted until 1920. Thus, here he ad-

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mits that central planning was instituted in 1920, not 1928. The economic collapse of 1921 thus occurs during the regime of economic planning and not civil war.

39. Carr, 205–6.
40. *Ibid.*, 205.
41. *Ibid.*, 216.
42. *Ibid.*, 228.
43. *Ibid.*, 271.
44. *Ibid.*, 246.
45. *Ibid.*, 260–61.
46. *Ibid.*, 275.
47. See Szamuely, 84–91, for a discussion of the debate among Bolshevik decision-makers over the introduction of NEP and the defense of war communism by Larin, Kritsman, et al.
48. Carr, 275.
49. *Ibid.*, 276. Here again Carr does not maintain a consistent position. The confusion over war communism was even represented within official Soviet publications. Consider the following statement from an article in *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entrsiklopediya* vol. XII (1928):

> It would be a great error not to see, behind the obvious economic utopianism of the attempt of war communism to *realize an immediate marketless-centralized reorganization of our economy,* the fact that fundamentally the economic policy of the period of war communism was imposed by the embittered struggle for victory. . . . The historical sense of war communism consisted in the need to take possession of the economic base by relying on military and political force. But it would be *incorrect* to see in war communism only measures of mobilization imposed by war conditions. In working to adapt the whole economy to the needs of the civil war, in building a consistent system of war communism, the working class was at the same time laying the foundation for further socialist reconstruction (quoted in Carr, 275n1, emph. added).

While Carr can argue that Marxian language was an *ex post* justification for policies that were unavoidable, it seems just as possible that war emergency language is an *ex post* excuse for a dream that proved unrealizable.

50. Stephen Cohen, "In Praise of War Communism" in *Revolution and Politics in Russia,* ed. Alexander and Janet Rabinowitch (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 193.
51. Nikolai Bukharin, *The Path to Socialism in Russia* (New York: Omicron Books, 1967[1924]), 178, quoted in Szamuely, 108n57.
52. Bukharin, "R.S.F.S.R.," *Pravda,* December 3, 1922: 3, quoted in Cohen, *Bukharin,* 146.
53. Bukharin, *O likvidatorstve nashikh dnei,* 1924, quoted in Alec Nove,

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"Bukharin and His Ideas," *Political Economy and Soviet Socialism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), 86. See also Cohen, "Rethinking Bolshevism," *Bukharin*, 123–59.

54. It seems that Jürgen Habermas, arguably the leading leftist academic in the world today, recognizes this point when he argues that even radical democratic socialism might be impossible:

> All modern economies are so complex that a complete shift to participatory decision-making processes, that is to say, a democratic restructuring at every level, would inevitably do damage to some of the sensitive requirements of contemporary organizations. If we wish to maintain such organizations at their present level of complexity, then it is probable that the idea of socialism can no longer (and need no longer) be realized by means of the emancipation from alienated labour. It may be that initiatives to democratize global economic priorities and to create humane working conditions can only come from outside in future, by which I mean that a thoroughgoing internal reorganization of the economy in accordance with the principles of self-administration is neither possible nor necessary ("Ideologies and Society in the Post-War World" in *Habermas: Autonomy & Solidarity* [interviews with Jürgen Habermas], ed. Peter Dews [London: Verso, 1986], 45).

But Habermas, while admitting these problems, holds fast to his criticism of the market—blind to the possibility that the radical solution of the social ills that concern him lies in the radical decentralism of a truly market-based society.

55. My concern is not so much with what Marx meant by socialism, though this is obviously a point of importance, but rather what leading European and Russian Marxist thinkers thought Marx's project entailed. In particular, with regard to the Russian experience, what did Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, et al., think a Marxian world should look like?

56. Alexander Gerschenkron, "History of Economic Doctrines and Economic History," *American Economic Review* LIX, no. 2 (May 1969): 16. Also see Joseph Berliner, "Marxism and the Soviet Economy," *Problems of Communism* XII, no. 5 (September/October 1964): 1–10, who argues that Marxism has had little impact on Soviet socialism, and that economists writing about Soviet economic policy and institutions should not find it necessary to consider Marxian theory.

57. See Nove, 47.

58. This misunderstanding of Marx's project is due to the fact that many believe Marx's analysis is limited to a critique of capitalism and suggests nothing for the implementation of socialism. But as Don Lavoie has argued in depth, Marx's negative view of capitalism implies a positive view of socialism. See Lavoie, 28–47; Don Lavoie, *National Economic Planning: What is Left?* (Cambridge: Ballinger, 1985), 11–24, 211–45.

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59. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (New York: Modern Library, 1906), 92.
60. Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, 97.
61. See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," *Selected Works*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), vol. I, 98–137; vol. I, "The Class Struggles in France," 186–299; vol. I, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," 394–487; vol. II, "The Civil War in France," 178–244.
62. Radoslav Selucky, *Marxism, Socialism, Freedom* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979) has argued that Marx's project of the rationalization of the economy may be inconsistent with the rationalization of politics Marx envisioned. The concept of a centrally planned unity in economic life is mutually exclusive from the ideal of full democratic participation within political life. This line of reasoning is consistent with basic Marxian materialist philosophy, which argued that the material base (economic life) determines the super-structure (the realm of ideas). Selucky argues that

> No Marxist may legitimately construct a social system whose political superstructure would differ structurally from its economic base. . . . If one accepts Marx's concept of base and superstructure, a centralised, hierarchically organized economic subsystem cannot coexist with a pluralistic, horizontally organized self-governed political subsystem (78).

63. Lavoie, *National Economic Planning*, 18–19.
64. Alexander Rüstow, *Freedom and Domination: A Historical Critique of Civilization* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980[1950–1957]), 571.
65. Ludwig von Mises sparked the debate in 1920 with his challenging article, "Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth," which was later translated and reprinted in *Collectivist Economic Planning*, ed. F. A. Hayek (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1975[1935]). Mises refined his argument in *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1981[1922]). Mises's conclusion that rational economic calculation was (is) impossible under socialism was endorsed by Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 2 vols., ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978[1922]), vol. I, 63–211, esp. 100–113. This triggered responses from German socialist writers such as Karl Polanyi and Eduard Heimann; see Mises, *Socialism*, 473–78. Also see William Keizer, "Two Forgotten Articles by Ludwig von Mises on the Rationality of Socialist Economic Calculation," *Review of Austrian Economics* I (1987): 109–22, for a more extensive discussion of the Central European debate of the 1920s.

    Mises's contention was later challenged in the English-language journals during the 1930s and 1940s. The counter-argument was made by Oskar Lange, *On the Economic Theory of Socialism*, ed. Benjamin Lippincott (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1970[1939]); and Abba P. Lerner,

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The Economics of Control (New York: Macmillan, 1944), among others. Mises's student and associate, F. A. Hayek, was an active participant in the debate with the market socialist writers; see Hayek's essays in *Collectivist Economic Planning* and *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980[1948]).

The debate has been a subject of growing interest among economists, and useful summaries can be found in Trygve J. B. Hoff, *Economic Calculation in the Socialist Society* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1981[1949]); Murray N. Rothbard, "Ludwig von Mises and Economic Calculation Under Socialism" in *The Economics of Ludwig von Mises,* ed. Lawrence Moss (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1976), 67–77; Karen Vaughn, "Economic Calculation Under Socialism: The Austrian Contribution," *Economic Inquiry* 18 (October 1980): 535–54; Peter Murrell, "Did the Theory of Market Socialism Answer the Challenge of Ludwig von Mises?," *History of Political Economy* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 92–105. The most extensive treatment of the debate, however, is provided by Lavoie's *Rivalry and Central Planning*.

66. Hayek, "Foreword" in Boris Brutzkus, *Economic Planning in Soviet Russia* (Westport: Hyperion Press, Inc., 1981[1935]), ix.
67. K. Leites, *Recent Economic Developments in Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1922).
68. Arthur Shadwell, *The Breakdown of Socialism* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1927).
69. Leo Pasvolsky, *The Economics of Communism: With Special Reference to Russia's Experiment* (New York: Macmillan, 1921).
70. Boris Brutzkus, *Economic Planning in Soviet Russia,* for which the original essay was written in 1920.
71. Polanyi, "The Foolishness of History," 35.
72. *Ibid.*
73. This policy of introducing ideological justifications only to discount them is perhaps the greatest fault I find with both the Remmington and Malle books.
74. As will be suggested later the move to NEP, and not taking power prematurely, was Lenin's real deviation from Marx.
75. Roberts, *Alienation and the Soviet Economy,* 37.
76. *Ibid.,* 39.
77. "Chernovoi proekt tezisov obrashchenia k internatsional'noi sotsialisticheskoi komissii i ko vsem sotsialisticheskim partiiam," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* 30:278–79, quoted in Alfred Evans, "Rereading Lenin's *State and Revolution,*" *Slavic Review* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 18n79.
78. Lenin, "Resolution on the Current Situation," *Collected Works,* 45 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), vol. 24, 310.
79. This ripeness issue, which many commentators get stuck on, is actually a weak reed upon which to rest one's interpretation of the events. One would be hard-pressed to argue that Marx, who throughout his lifetime

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kept close watch for any and all possible chances for revolution, would have behaved differently from Lenin given the same situation. Marx, we should remember, did not hesitate to propose a proletarian revolution in France in 1848. Moreover, from a Marxist perspective an analysis that finds an easy out in the ripeness issue is not sufficiently critical. Regardless of Marx's own revolutionary activity, or whether or not he would have agreed with Lenin's use of his doctrines to come to power, concentration on the ripeness issue leads to a fundamental misunderstanding of the Soviet experience, and of socialism in general. As Lavoie points out,

> The reasons for Lenin's failure to achieve either democratic political goals or a prosperous economy are seldom traced to intrinsic elements of socialist aspirations. Russia, it is pointed out, began without democratic political traditions and with a backward economy. These special difficulties and not flaws within socialism itself, it is widely believed, brought Lenin's dream to its rude awakening. This interpretation of Soviet history in effect lets socialism off the hook for whatever political crimes or economic irrationalities the USSR is shown guilty of ("Political and Economic Illusions of Socialism," CRITICAL REVIEW 1, no. 1 [Winter 1986–7]: 1–2).

But as Lavoie argues, this should not be the case. Rather we should see that "in the failure of War Communism and the retreat to NEP the impossibility of planning as articulated theoretically in the Mises-Hayek critique was directly demonstrated in practice" (10).

80. "Speech in Favour of the Resolution on the Current Situation, April 29 (May 12), 1917," *Collected Works,* vol. 24, 308.
81. *Ibid.,* 311.
82. *Collected Works,* vol. 25, 327–69.
83. *Ibid.,* 333ff.
84. *Ibid.,* 360–61.
85. *Ibid.,* 361–62.
86. *Imperialism,* in Lenin's *Collected Works,* vol. 22, 185–304, was written from January to June 1916 and was published in Petrograd in late April 1917. *The State and Revolution,* in *Collected Works,* vol. 25, 384–497, was written in August and September 1917.
87. Lenin, *Collected Works* vol. 22, 205.
88. *Ibid.,* 302–3.
89. Lenin, *Collected Works* vol. 25, 448.
90. *Ibid.,* 431–32.
91. *Ibid.,* 478.
92. *Ibid.,* 497.
93. Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution,* 3 vols. (New York: Pathfinder Books, 1987[1932]), vol. 3:323–24. Also see John Reed, *Ten Days That Shook the World* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985[1919]), 117ff.
94. Shadwell, 23.

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95. See Szamuely, *First Models,* 10ff., and Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution* vol. 2, 96ff., for a discussion of these policies. Also notice that prominence is not given to grain requestioning in this outline of the socialist program of the Bolsheviks from 1918 to 1921. While undoubtedly grain requisitioning was a major policy it was not the major element in the program of socialist transformation. Concentration upon the food procurement policy of requisitioning while ignoring the various other components of the Bolsheviks' economic and social policy (such as banking policy) leads one to emphasize the emergency requirement of gathering food for the Red Army. Cf. Lars Lih, "Bolshevik *Razverstka* and War Communism," *Slavic Review* 45, no. 4 (Winter 1986): 673–88.
96. Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary, 1901–1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 115. Also see Vasil Selyunin, "The Origins" [English title], *Novy Mir* (May 1988): 162–89.
97. See Remington, 78ff., for an extended discussion of the labor mobilization initiatives of the Bolsheviks. In particular, see his discussion of Trotsky's military organization of labor and Trotsky's desire for the full implementation of the principle of one-man management.
98. See Malle, 322, for a general discussion of the theory and practice of food procurement in Bolshevik Russia.
99. As Trotsky would later (1922) describe their efforts toward socialist construction during war communism:

> How did we start? We began . . . in economic policy by breaking with the bourgeois past firmly and without compromise. Earlier there was a market—we liquidate it, free trade—liquidate it, competition—we abolish it, commercial calculation—we abolish it. What to have instead? The central, solemn, sacred, Supreme Economic Council for National Economy that allocates everything, organizes everything, cares for everything: where should machines go to, where raw materials, where the finished product—this all will be decided and allocated from a single centre, through its authorized organs. This plan of ours has failed.

See Szamuely, 94, where he discusses Trotsky's speech at the Eleventh Party Congress in March 1922.

100. Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 27, 245, 252, 256.
101. Malle, 32–33.
102. Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 27, 268–69.
103. Quoted in Shadwell, 24.
104. Quoted in Leon Smolinsky, "Planning without Theory, 1917–1967," *Survey* no. 64 (July 1967): 113.
105. Quoted in Lancelot Lawton, *An Economic History of Soviet Russia,* 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1932), vol. 1, 108.
106. Quoted in Szamuely, 34.
107. Nikolai Bukharin and Eugene Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism*

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(Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966[1919]). The appendix of this book contains the adopted Party program, 373ff. Bukharin wrote all of Part One, the theoretical exposition on the decay of capitalism. He also wrote the introduction to Part Two, which concerns itself with the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of communism. In addition, Bukharin wrote the chapters on the organization of industry, the protection of labor and public hygene. Preobrazhensky wrote the remaining chapters.

108. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, 70, emph. added. It is this program of rationalization that Milyutin announced with pride in June 1920 had been accomplished. "All enterprises and all industrial branches," he stated, "are considered like a single enterprise. Instead of competition, instead of struggle, Soviet Power with determination implements the principle of unity of the national economy in the economic field." See *Narodnoe khoziaistvo Sovetskoi Rossii* (1920), 8, quoted in Malle, 320n27. It is this very project of achieving *ex ante* coordination that Mises directly challenged; while Bukharin stated that the planner would know in advance how, to what and for whom to allocate resources, Mises merely asked the planners how, in the absence of monetary calculation, they would know which projects were economically feasible and which ones were not. It is this disregard on the part of the Bolsheviks for economic calculation that finally led to the collapse and the retreat to NEP.

109. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, 74. Bukharin does, however, admit that this program is not fully realizable at the moment. Two or three generations would have to grow up under the new conditions before the project was fully realizable; then "the bureaucracy, the permanent officialdom, will disappear" and the state would wither away. Bukharin, at least here, did not seem to understand the threat of the growing bureaucracy associated with the communist scheme. For a discussion of the bureaucratization of social life under Soviet rule see Bruno Rizzi, *The Bureaucratization of the World* (New York: The Free Press, 1985[1939]); Milovan Djilas, *The New Class* (New York: Praeger, 1957); and George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979).

110. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, 72, 77. See also "The Economics of the Transition Period" in *The Politics and Economics of the Transition Period,* ed. Kenneth J. Tarbuck (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979[1920]), 155, where Bukharin argues that

> Money represents the material social ligament, the knot which ties up the whole highly developed commodity system of production. It is clear that during the transition period, in the process of abolishing the commodity system as such, a process of 'self-negation' of money takes place. It is manifested in the first place in the so-called devaluation of money and in the second place, in the fact that the distribution of paper money is divorced from the distribution

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of products, and vice versa. Money ceases to be the universal equivalent and becomes a conventional—and moreover extremely imperfect—symbol of the circulation of products.

111. Bukharin, "The Economics of the Transition Period," 155.
112. "Program of the Communist Party of Russia (adopted at the Eighth Party Congress Held March 18 to 23, 1919)," in Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, 390.
113. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, 397. Also see Lenin, "Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.)," *Collected Works* vol. 29, 98–140. Lenin proposed that "the R.C.P. will strive as speedily as possible to introduce the most radical measures to pave the way for the abolition of money, first and foremost to replace it by savings-bank books, cheques, short-term notes entitling the holders to receive goods from the public stores and so forth. . . ." (115–16). Lenin argued for the eventual elimination of hand-to-hand currency and its replacement by a system of cashless accounting, i.e., sophisticated barter.
114. "Appendix: Documents of the Revolution" in Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution,* vol. 2, 490.
115. "Decree of the Supreme Economic Council on the Nationalization of Small Industrial Enterprises, of November 29, 1920" in *ibid.,* 494.
116. Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 32, 329–65.
117. *Ibid.* vol. 27, 340.
118. *Ibid.,* 339.
119. "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments" (October 17, 1921) in *Collected Works,* vol. 33, 62.
120. *Ibid.,* vol. 35, 475.
121. F. A. Hayek, "The Use of Knowledge in Society" in *Individualism and Economic Order,* 78.
122. Lavoie, *National Economic Planning,* 214.

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LETTERS

The Evidence of the Senses

TO THE EDITOR:

Professor Munz ("Sense Perception and the Reality of the World," Winter 1988) is correct in placing my work in the tradition of empiricists who hold that perception is the basis of our knowledge of the world, the foundation of any certainty we may achieve. My approach differs from that of other empiricists in many respects, including the one he mentions: I regard perception as a distinct mode of cognition, intermediate between sensations on the one hand and conceptual knowledge on the other. Unlike sensation, perception is the awareness of *entities:* stable objects in three-dimensional space. Unlike conceptual knowledge, this awareness is direct, it involves no interpretation, and can therefore serve as a non-circular cognitive ground for conceptual knowledge of those objects.

Munz says I am "producing rabbits out of a hat" because I assume that external objects exist for perception to be aware of. But I establish the independent existence of such objects in the first chapter, before I begin my detailed analysis of perceptual awareness. Following Ayn Rand, I call this thesis "the primacy of existence," and I consider it self-evident. This does not mean, contrary to Munz, that it is an arbitrary posit. I explain at some length (a) how the independent existence of an object is implicit in any instance of awareness, (b) how any attempt to deny the point refutes itself by assuming it, and (c) why non-realist philosophers have nevertheless tried to deny it.

Finally, Munz feels I should have given more attention to cognitive science and to evolutionary epistemology. In fact, most of chapter 2 is a critique of the standard paradigm in cognitive science: the computational theory. Evolutionary epistemology—the idea that our cognitive faculties must be fairly reliable because otherwise we could not have survived natural selection—did receive much shorter shrift in my book, but that is because I consider it irrelevant to the fundamental epistemological issue. And the reason is clear from Munz's own formulation.

"If there is any reason at all for believing in 'the primacy of existence,'" he writes, "it does not come from our sense perceptions but from the fact that we have evolved by natural selection. Without a real world, there would have been nothing to do the selecting and evolution could not have taken place." This approach is a complete epistemological inversion: it treats as self-evident a complex scientific theory, and tries to use the theory to validate its own perceptual basis. The theory of evolution is a hypothesis concerning a global

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mechanism, operating over eons, on populations of organisms some of which, according to the theory itself, no longer exist—a hypothesis which, since we cannot see the mechanism itself in operation, must be verified by integrating a huge amount of evidence drawn from countless observations. Munz's statement assumes that we can be sure natural selection occurs before we can be sure our senses are valid. How then did he learn about natural selection if not by relying on his perceptual awareness of such things as animals, books, and biology professors? The statement assumes that our knowledge of natural selection precedes our knowledge of a real world. In what nonreal realm, then, did we first establish the occurrence of this mechanism?

The primacy of existence is an axiomatic truth about cognition as such, about the fundamental relation between subject and object. Once we have grasped this truth, the theory of evolution will certainly provide us with valuable information about how our cognitive faculties came to function as they do. But evolution cannot play the fundamental epistemological role Munz assigns it; it cannot, as I say on page 195 of my book, "provide the missing link between subject and object." The theory is itself an instance of cognition—and not a self-evident one—and could not survive any challenge to the axiom.

David Kelley
Verbank, N.Y.

TO THE EDITOR:

I wish to take up only a couple of points in Peter Munz's review of David Kelley's *The Evidence of the Senses*.

First, Munz maintains that Kelley's realism is merely an assumption. I dispute this on pure textual grounds. Kelley does offer a defense of the purported axiom "existence exists" as the ground for choosing realism (40–41). Then he sets out to argue that a certain conception of perceptual knowledge accords with realism. This is a very respectable approach, indeed. There is nothing question-begging about it. Munz turns the approach into a liability by making it appear that Kelley's choice of realism is arbitrary—"one could just as readily start with the opposite assumption" (71). In fact that claim is false and Kelley's discussion offers a respectable argument to show why.

Second, if Munz is unimpressed with arguing from axioms, then he must be pretty unimpressed with a good deal of philosophy, East or West. Descartes, who seems to be the alternative Munz thinks Kelley might just as well have chosen, would not welcome such a dismissive treatment of axioms. And rightly so. Aristotle was no less fond of axiomatic reasoning. Axioms are very helpful in learning just where we must stand as we begin our reflection about details. If we cannot abandon a given belief without ending up believing nonsense, this is powerful ground for not letting go of that belief. In particular, if our basic (tacit) belief that existence exists (and is thus primary) is not just an arbitrary assumption, then to build on it in ways that make knowledge most

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clearly understandable, to offer a good account of it (the argument from best explanation), is much more promising than Munz's review makes it appear. (I challenge Munz or anyone to provide some well-grounded belief in contrast to which the belief in the existence of existence is a mere assumption! He does not even tell us what he means by an "assumption," and surely given the combative use he makes of the idea he should.)

Third, to put some more bite into these remarks, I would like to suggest where Descartes went wrong. He thought all instances of knowing must have exactly the same character—axiomatic and/or deductive certainty—certainty beyond a shadow of doubt. Now, for example, my knowledge that I read a review by Peter Munz just will not satisfy Descartes's criterion—never mind my knowledge as to where my car is parked and how old I am. Yet I have such knowledge. It is only the ground of knowledge of reality as such—the most general knowledge—that requires Cartesian certainty. That is because it is so comprehensive that any possibility of being wrong—even a bare possibility of it, such as worries Descartes in every instance of his believing something—matters. Other forms of knowledge need not have that degree of certainty. It need not be shown that I could not be—i.e., that it is "logically impossible" for me to be—wrong, only that I am indeed right, beyond any reasonable doubt. (Here is where I find Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* such a fine work in the theory of knowledge, despite its occasional lapses into conventionalism.)

Descartes treated thinking or consciousness as a state or property, rather than as a relationship between one's mind and what one is aware of by means of it. Ergo "I think" has no chance of having the primacy Descartes thought it has. This is why his belief in the primacy of consciousness—a belief shared by most prominent philosophers since that time—is wrong. (See, for a detailed account of Descartes's views, Hiram Caton, *The Origin of Subjectivity,* Yale University Press, 1973. My view is developed at greater length in my "Epistemology and Moral Knowledge," *The Review of Metaphysics,* September 1982.)

Can the same criticism be made of "existence exists"? Certainly all kinds of sophisticated (or sophistic?) students of philosophy have lately been engaged in Rand-bashing by trotting out the line about the hopeless vacuity of this idea—never mind that virtually any attempt to ground knowledge (take, for example, Hume's and Russell's) faces similar problems of artificial simplicity and generality.

If "existence exists" falls prey to arguments similar to those that refute Descartes's "axiom," so be it. Then Kelley is wrong to think that he does much more than assume the primacy of existence. But I see nothing in Munz's review that suggests that Kelley is wrong—really, nothing. And I have to admit that I have never been able to appreciate any kind of skepticism about the existence of reality—none. All are circular arguments, self-referentially inconsistent. (Russell's theory of types tried desperately to save some version of them but failed.) And most of those who propound them don't even realize it—which does call into doubt the philosophical character of their thinking.

I do agree with Munz that much of the detail of so-called evolutionary epis-

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temology is congruent with Kelley's ideas. But the notion that every bit of knowledge conforms to that account has its own self-referential problems. (To raise them is not a mere argumentative ploy—they are obstacles to truth and thus serious matters.)

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PETER MUNZ *replies:*

Although I did appreciate the acumen of Kelley's arguments, I must confess that I was not sympathetic to his project, which was to establish the primacy of existence and then to argue that, given such primacy, we have a mode of correct perception of that existence. This lack of sympathy is correctly spotted by both correspondents, although they do not charge me with it in so many words. My reply to them must therefore be mainly concerned with a defense of that lack of sympathy. Kelley's project is of the utmost importance if one believes that we have knowledge because we learn from experience and perception. It so happens, however, that we do not learn from our perceptions and then build these perceptions into abstract theories. We learn, as Karl Popper has taught us, not from our perceptions, but from our mistakes. Hence the psycho-logic of perception is a side-issue. When we learn from our mistakes, we subject any perceptions we have to criticism and thus automatically select those which have failed to be eliminated by criticism. The actual process of perception, therefore, does not have to be "correct." On the contrary. We learn faster if it is mistaken. What matters is the amount of criticism we can raise against perceptions; not the psycho-logic which proves that some perceptions are correct and that some things "exist."

Tibor R. Machan insists that if I am "unimpresse with arguing from axioms . . . [I] must be pretty unimpressed with a good deal of philosophy." He is right. I am unimpressed by a good deal of philosophy and as far as Kelley's axioms are concerned, I am specially unimpressed because, given the views of evolutionary epistemology, they are superfluous. David Kelley seems to underrate the philosophical potential of the theory of evolution. He is right in saying that it "is a hypothesis . . . which must be verified by integrating a huge amount of evidence drawn from countless observations." But I think he is confusing two different things if he believes that the hypothetical character of the mechanism of natural selection undermines evolutionary epistemology. The hypothesis involved is a hypothesis about the precise mechanism of evolution. This hypothesis could well turn out to be false. But when we invoke evolution as proof that the outside world is real, we are not making a hypothesis about the mechanics of evolution. We are merely stating that we *must* have evolved; otherwise we would not be here to think about the matter. The cor-

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ollary of this statement is that there must be a real world and that it must have certain characteristics for this evolution to have taken place. Had the world not been there or had its characteristics been significantly different, evolution could not have taken place and we would not exist. This is known as the Anthropic Principle and goes far to weaken the arguments raised against my review by both Kelley and Machan.

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